

A B R I E F ¹⁰⁷⁹
VINDICATION
OF THE
Antient Prophets

FROM THE
Imputations and Misrepresentations of
such as adhere to our Present
Pretenders to INSPIRATION.

In a LETTER to
Sir RICHARD BULKELEY, Bart.

L O N D O N,

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PREFACE.

THE following Papers, have been sometime drawn up; tho' not published before, because it was hoped by many that the Failure of Events, in many Instances, would by this time have put a Stop to the Pretenses of our Modern Prophets, and convinced their Followers, as many of them promised they should, of the Vanity, and Delusion of those Pretenses. I confess, for my own Part, I always thought, and often said it, that they would make use of those very Evasions for holding out longer than any Period fixed, which I see now they have actually had Recourse to. And whether they did or no; whether they proceeded or desisted; it was

P R E F A C E.

my Judgment that the Wounds which they had given to the Antient Prophets, and the strange Absurdities which they had fixed upon them in their Zeal for their own Defense, were still the same; and still had the same tendency to weaken the Credit of all Revel'd Religion amongst Men of Unstable Principles: by whom they were embraced, I found, and used, to that very Purpose. So that it is not so much out of Expectation to convince any Persons engaged in this Modern Cause, who have taken fresh Courage from the Failures God hath vouchsafed them; (tho' I could heartily wish for such an Effect;) as with Design to maintain the Credit of the Antient Prophets that I now give the World this Trouble: viz. To shew that there is no Similitude in any one Material Instance between them; that all their Allegations to the contrary are groundless; and that our New Prophets must stand or fall by themselves, without engaging the Antient ones in their Quarrel. This seemed necessary in Justice to the sacred Writings: For which it is to be hoped that all Concern is not lost amongst Men; tho' the Patrons of this New Dispensation have struck such a Stroke at them in their hasty Zeal, as if they cared not what became of them, so
their

P R E F A C E.

their New Cause might gain Ground. I tax them not with any evil Design against them: But endeavour to guard against the Evil Effects of what they have unwarily, and without Ground, fixed upon them.

If, in the doing this, I differ in any Particular from a received Notion, or the Judgment of others, who equally disapprove the Injustice done to the Old Prophets, let it be pardoned to the good Design which I have in the Main: And if in any Part of this Work I have ignorantly run into any Error of Consequence, let it be detected, and confuted, with the Spirit of Demonstration, and Meekness. On the other Side, let not any of the Persons engaged in this New Cause pretend that I am unqualified for such a Work, because I have not (they may imagine) been my self amongst them: For I assure them I take all the Accounts of their Behaviour upon Trust from themselves, believing for the present every thing amongst them to be just what they relate it to be, without questioning the Truth of their Relations. Besides, my Business is not to comment upon their Proceedings, or to expose them; but to defend the Antient Scripture-Prophets: Of whom, by the Way, I must observe, that these Moderns themselves can-

P R E F A C E.

not pretend to form any Judgment, if none must be allowed competent Judges, but such as have been Eye-witnesses, and Ear-witnesses, to the very Gestures, and Voices of the Inspired.

Some judicious Persons may think that too much deference is here paid to the Efforts of Men addicted to our New Prophets. But let it be remember'd that the Deference is paid to the Antient Prophets rather than to them: and that when Men of Sense and Learning in other Points, undertake a Cause of so pernicious Consequence to Reveled Religion, it is not the Weakness of what they say, that will be Antidote enough against the Poison of it, unless it be detected, and evidently laid before the Reader's Eyes.

Others, I find, think that Raillery and Banter is the best Way of handling even the most sacred Matters. But let it be tried first how Princes, and Men in great Offices, will like to have their Qualities, their Decrees, their Commissions, examined by their Servants and all under them, with an Ayre of Ridicule; and what Ground their just Authority will get in Humane Society, should every thing relating to themselves

P R E F A C E.

selves be universally handled in Humour, and Grimace, and Buffoonry; and then it will be time to try it in more Important Matters. I doubt, Mathematical Truths themselves would be exploded by Universal Raillery, and Ridicule; as well as all Order and Decency out of Humane Society: And I fear this New Test of Truth is of that trying Nature, that it will suffer nothing to be true. I am sure, if it should be generally embraced, the World must come at length to be made up of Creatures perpetually grinning, and mimicking, and playing Mountebank-tricks at one another: And they must always be in the Right, who can get the longest and loudest Laugh on their Side. A serious Countenance must be a monstrous Sight: And an honest Enquirer into Truth the greatest Jest imaginable. ~~And let any one judge what a~~ Blessed State of things must succeed!

It is a melancholy Contemplation to think how much the Atheism and Profaneness of some tends to the extreme of Enthusiasm in others; and how reciprocally the Enthusiasm of these others feeds and nourisheth that Atheism, and Profaneness: Whilst the serious and sedate Religion, lying between the two Extremes, suffers from both;
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P R E F A C E.

the profane condemning it with Enthusiasm in the Lump for Madness; and the Enthusiastical representing it as a Dry State little better than No Religion at all, because it is not guided, and governed by their Maxims, and doth not pretend to their Heighths. I pray God in Mercy to remedy these Evils: And, if the following Papers be any ways qualified for that Purpose, to add his Powerfull Blessing to the sincere Endeavours of the Writer.

A
VINDICATION
OF THE
Antient Prophets, &c.

In a LETTER to Sir Richard
Bulkeley.

SIR,



Take the Liberty thus publickly to lay before your self and the World, the following Remarks upon your late *Defense* of those whom you call *Prophets*: In which you seem to have endeavour'd, with all your Might, to fix as many Absurdities and Con-

traditions upon the *Antient Prophets*, as your *Learning* and *Sagacity* cou'd find out; that so it might fare equally well, in the Judgment of Men, with *them*, and your *New Friends*. You must not therefore take it amiss, if *one*, who hath as great a Zeal for the *old Prophets* as you have express'd for the *New*, think it as neces-

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fary to say something in *their* Vindication as you have judged it to appear in Defense of your *New Directors*. This is the chief *Design* of the following *Papers*. But before I enter upon it, it will not be at all improper to premise a few *Considerations*, not unsuitable to the Occasion of this *Debate*.

1. I appeal to your self if it be not of dangerous Consequence to receive as *Prophets* those who are not truly so, as well as to reject those who are: And whether it doth not equally lay us open to God's Wrath.

2. Whether we be not, in the *New Testament*, by our Lord himself, over and over again forewarned that many shall appear alarming his People with *Prophetical Warnings*; That many *false Prophets* shall arise: Whether on the other Hand he so much as once warns us of any true Prophets whom we are certainly to expect; or once gives us in Charge to attend to any pretended *Revelations* and *Inspirations* concerning his coming; nay, whether he doth not expressly command us not to be alarmed at any such, nor to regard them; but only to be always ready and prepar'd to receive him by our good Lives and holy Conversations.

3. Whether St. Paul, when he speaks of such as alarmed their Brethren about the coming of *Christ*, gives *Christians* any Ground to expect *Prophets* upon this Subject; or doth not rather divert their Minds from all such *Expectations* by assuring them, as their Lord did before him, that *that Day* would come as a *Thief* in the Night, i. e. without Preparation and Notice: And this not with Respect to the Careless and Unbelievers only, but with Respect to all the Body of *Christians*: For he speaks of it as of a Rule so settled, that they needed no Instruction from him

him about it *1 Thes. 5. 2.* and to be regarded by all. Then he goes on to inform them that the *Good* will be always ready, and the *Wicked* only careless and unprepared; but represents them both equally without *Prophetical Warnings* of the particular Time of it. The Method he layeth down to the End that *that Day might not overtake them as a Thief*, is, their *watching*, and not walking in *Darkness*, but in *Light*; without referring them to any but the *general Warning* given by their *Lord and Master*. I appeal to your self whether *St. Peter* likewise, in speaking of his *coming*, layeth not down the same Rule without a Word concerning *Prophets* before that Day, or any other Warning but what they had had already; or of any other Preparation besides *Holy Conversation* and *Godliness*. *2 Pet. 3. 10, 11, &c.* Upon all which Accounts I desire to know

4. Whether a *Christian* can justly be blamed who seeks not after any pretended Evidences of *New Prophets*; Whether he may not reasonably rest satisfied in what he finds in his *Lord's* and his *Apostle's* Declarations; and whether, if he prepare himself by *Holiness of Life*, by Attendance upon *God's* Worship, by commemorating his *Master's* Death and Sufferings in the *Eucharist*, by honestly and diligently following the Employments of his Calling; I say, whether if he prepare himself by this Method, so as to be always ready for his *Master's* coming, he doth not more strictly and closely follow the Directions of his *Lord*, than he who is seeking after *New Dispensations*, *New Revelations*, and amusing himself with new *Predictions* concerning the very Time, and Year when his *Lord* shall come. Pray consider whether there be any thing in the *Gospel* which makes it the Duty of every *Christian* to attend to any who profess as

4 A VINDICATION of

Prophets to fix the Time of that great *Revolution*, before you condemn those who neglect the *Dispensation* you patronize, without neglecting the Preparation which the *Gospel* makes necessary for our happy meeting the *Lord of Glory*. We acknowledge a Belief of his coming necessary; and a constant Holiness of Life necessary. This is the Preparation he expects. But whether he will come at Noon, or at Midnight; to Day, or to Morrow; this Year, or next; in this Age, or the following; we leave to him, as a thing not necessary to be determined, nor necessary to be believed. And methinks we might hope that *others* should leave the World as undisturb'd, and free in this Matter, as our *Lord* hath commanded them to be. I wou'd farther ask,

5. Whether we might not reasonably expect that in Justification of *Christian Prophets*, the Pattern of *Christ*, and his *Apostles* should be rather follow'd and insisted on, than the Example or Behaviour of *Prophets* under the *Old Testament*; supposing these to be justly represented by you. For tho' these were *Prophets*, truly sent of God; yet there is a manifest difference between some Parts of the Behaviour and Speech of them, and of those under the *New Testament*: As the Law of *Moses* was truly God's Law, and perfect for the End design'd; yet doth it differ very much from the Plainness and Simplicity of the *Gospel*. I grant that God's Ways must often be unaccountable to us: Nor do I pretend to be a compleat Judge of them. But to a *Christian* it cannot but be a Prejudice, to see *Christians* pretending to *Inspiration*, by the same Spirit which guided *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and yet differing from them to so great a Degree, as if it repented *Almighty God* of the gentle Method in which he chose to visit his *Prophets* at the Beginning of the *Evangelical Dispensation*. As

the Antient Prophets.

5

As I thought it proper to premise these few things; so it is fit likewise, before I enter upon the main Debate, to take some notice of the *Preliminary Part* of your *Defense*; particularly of what you offer p. 6, 7. in order to prove from our Lord's foretelling the coming of *False Prophets*, that *at the same time there must be True Ones*: Because in the handling of this Point you have taken Occasion to discover a very inaccountable Part of the *Conduct* of your *New Friends*; and to endeavour to defend it from *Holy Scripture*. As to the Point beforemention'd, therefore, you argue, or seem to argue, two Ways.

I. What Occasion, say you, for *Satan* to send forth *False Prophets*, unless there be *True Ones* at the same time? p. 6. where by *False Prophets* you mean *Prophets* rais'd up and sent forth by *Satan*. But the Answer is ealie, viz. 1. It is the great Interest of *Satan* to disturb Men's Minds, and divert them from the *Ordinary Means* of *Grace* settled already in the *Church of Christ*; and to bring all *Inspiration* and *Prophecie* into Contempt, if he can; and the like. 2. Unless you can pretend to know all the *Wiles*, and *unning* of that *Evil Spirit*, you must not pretend to judge of his Ways, according to the reasoning frequently used by your self. He may have *Ends* to serve which you cannot judge of. You may as well argue that God can't send *True Prophets*, unless there be first *False Ones*, seducing his People: For otherwise what Occasion for them? 4. You are *Historian* enough, to know that there are Instances of *False Prophets* at a Time when no *True Ones* have been known in the World. Do you think *Satan* had no Part in the sending forth *Mahomet*? And yet what *True Prophet* do we find actually then in the World to whose Designs he expressly oppos'd

6 A VINDICATION of

himself? 5. The *Case* of the World since the *Gospel* is very different from what it was before. The Authority of *Jesus Christ* is settled upon most authentic *Evidences*. His *Doctrine* is open to us: we have warning given us to take heed unto it: And no Promise in it of any *New Prophets* but rather *Intimations* to the contrary. And therefore *False Prophets* without the Appearance of *True Ones* at the same time are less dangerous to those who will attend to the *Gospel*: And may more justly be permitted to impose upon those who divert to them. 6. How absurd is it for you to pretend to make us believe that our *Saviour* could not forewarn us of *False Prophets* or pretended *Prophets* to come, without supposing or implying, that there wou'd be *True Ones* at the same time: For cannot any one of the ~~meanest~~ Capacity see that our Lord might have done this, without any such Implication? Give me leave for once to put the *Case*, that it was not the Design of *Almighty God* to send any more *Prophets* after the *Establishment* of the *Christian Dispensation* in the World, and yet that he foresaw there would be many *Pretenders* to *Prophecy* after this; upon these Suppositions, had it not been full as proper for our Lord to have forewarn'd his Followers of these *Pretenders*, as if there were to have been *Real ones* at the same time? or wou'd you preclude him from telling us there wou'd be *Pretenders*, unless he had decreed to send more and more *Real ones* into the World?

II. In your second Way of arguing p. 7. you understand by *False Prophets*, such as are under the Influence of *God's Spirit*, and yet do in the same Breath, mix their own *Falsities* with it, or such Inspirations as are supplied by the *Evil Spirit*, the *Father of Lies*: And so they must be themselves *True Prophets* as well as *False Prophets* and

and there likewise must be *True Prophets* to discern these *Falshoods*. This is all I can make of this obscure Passage: And I believe the like to this was never yet heard of; that the *False Prophets* of whom we are forewarn'd by our *Saviour*, and to whom we are commanded not to attend (for of these you are speaking;) are such as are sent forth by God; inspir'd by his Spirit; but yet mix their own, or a worse, with it in the same continued Discourse deliver'd all as the Dictates of God himself. I hope, therefore, you will not take it amiss if we call these Persons which you defend *False Prophets*, when you have here acknowledged that it is a frequent thing for them under the same *Inspiration* to speak *Truth* and *Falshood*; nay to be assist'd, not in different Discourses, but the same, by the *Father of Truth*, and the *Father of Lyes*. As you ~~therefore~~ for the sake of some *Truths* are pleas'd to think them *True Prophets*: So give us leave, for the sake of some *Falshoods*, which you acknowledge *may be further'd* by the *Evil Spirit*, to account them *False Prophets*, and such as are assist'd by the *Evil Spirit*. Nay, I pray, what need we desire any farther Proof? The *False Prophets*, (an Account of whom you are now giving us) are those against whom our *Saviour* forewarn'd us. These, you say, are such as mix their own, or a worse Spirit with the *Divine* in the same Discourse; and all deliver'd as one *Inspiration*. Well then, if this be so, and if your *Friends* come up exactly to this *Definition* of *False Prophets*, as you here contend they do; what remains but that *these* are of the Number of those *False Prophets* who, our *Saviour* forewarn'd us, shou'd arise, and to whom all Christians are forbid to attend? Their *Cause* is extreamly oblig'd to you indeed: for here you have made them at least in Part to belong to *Satan*; and prov'd them to be the *False Prophets* spoken

dele.

8 A VINDICATION of

spoken of by our Lord. The *Apostle* argues, what Fellowship hath *Christ* with *Belial*? But here you have united the great *God*, and his greatest *Enemy*, and given them both a Property in the same *Temple* at the same time. I confess I shou'd think from hence that you wrote this *Page* with Design to expose, instead of defending them; were it not that you are so kind as to bring in the *Scripture* for their Defense; which I will now be so just as to vindicate from your groundless Imputations. For, to defend your *Friends* in this Instance. 1. You say, the *False Prophets* in *Scripture* were not *Hypocrites*, but really under a *Prophetic Influence*. Thus *Jeremiah* did not accuse *Hananiah* of not being at all a *Prophet*; but only said upon a particular Occasion, *The Lord hath not spoken by Thee*. To apply this to the Case before us, We are content to say the same, if you like it; the *Prophets* you defend are *Prophets*: But the *Lord hath not spoken by them*. If they be under a *Prophetic Influence*; it must be either from *God*, or the *Evil Spirit*. If the *Lord* hath not spoken by them, you have told us the Consequence your self, viz. some other *Spirit* hath. But, I pray, consider, did the *Lord* speak by *Hananiah* at all at that time? And did he not pretend to speak the Words of the *Lord*, when he did not? And was he not a *False Prophet* in this Sense, professing himself influenc'd by *God* when he was not at all? Is here any thing of such a Mixture of *Spirits* as you are here absurdly defending? Did the *Lord* require any Body to attend to *Hananiah*? Nay, did he not punish his vain Pretenses with *Death*? This should make those tremble who assume to themselves to speak in *God's* Name; lest the *People* of this Land should at length be convinced of their false Pretenses, in like manner as the *Jews* were of those of *Hananiah*. Again, you say, *Abahs Prophets*.

phets were Prophets: But, according to Scripture, they were the Prophets of an *Evil Spirit*, and entirely under his *Direction*; not in the least Part of their Discourse influenced by God. Are your *Friends Prophets* in this Sense? or why is this alleg'd? You ought in their Vindication to have produc'd such as spoke, in the same Discourse, under the Influence of *God*, and of *Satan*: Or such as, under the *Influence of God*, dared to mix their own Inventions, and deliver them exactly as his *Words*, and yet were approv'd by him, and a Nation commanded to adhere to them. But you have greatly wander'd from this, and only furnish'd us with an unanswerable Argument against those you defend. For I argue, if these *Persons* under the same Agitations, and with the same Manner of Pronunciation, do deliver their own *Imaginations*, and *God's Message*, *thinking both to be equally Inspiration* as you acknowledge; p. 9. then is their own *Natural Power* sufficient without the Impulse of *God's Spirit*, to be the Cause of what you so much wonder at. You say indeed that their *Motions* and *Agitations* are *involuntary*: But the Motion of their *Tongue* must be *voluntary* in those Parts of their *Discourse* which you say they utter of their own Head, and their own Will: Therefore here is a Demonstration that the whole may not be *supernatural*, because that *Part* of it which you your self cannot distinguish from *God's Message*, till another *Inspiration* teacheth you, is here acknowledg'd by your self to be *natural*; and the Effect of their own *Will* and their own *Power*. If therefore what you can't distinguish from *God's Message*, and his immediate moving their *Organs*, be certainly their own *voluntary Action*; then likewise is it possible that what you call the *Force, Impulse, Agitation* of *God's Spirit* may be only *natural*. I hope you will not say that *Almighty God* absolutely forceth them

to

10 A VINDICATION of

to utter what it is his Will they shou'd not speak.

But lest this should seem too strange, you have absolutely invented two *Precedents* for it: The one out of the *Old Testament*; the other out of the *New*. 1. You say the *Schools* of the *Prophets* under the Law seem to have been for training up the Sons of the Prophets, that they might bring their own Spirit to an entire Subjection to the *Prophetic Spirit*. To which I answer, that this is a Device of your own to solve your own wretched *Scheme*, without any the least Shadow of a Proof: And therefore that you seem to think too meanly of your *Neighbours*, if you imagine they will be impos'd upon by such a precarious, and groundless Piece of *History*, invented by your self. There is nothing to be replied to such *Prattle* (to use your own Word) but *Astonishment* and *Pity*, when we think that any can venture to advance *Inventions* of their own in such a *Cause*; which they will find it hard to answer for another Day. But I suppose these *Schools* seem to you to have been instituted for this End, because it serv'd your present Purpose that they shou'd seem so. 2. The other *Precedent* you produce is the *Church of Corinth*, in which the *Apostle* seems to have laid down a *Rule* which serves your Purpose. If I shou'd answer that this seems not to be so to others, it wou'd be a sufficient Reply. But is this a tolerable *Vindication* of your *Friends*? Is it not certain that in the *Primitive Church* there were Persons who pretended to be influenced by the *Divine Spirit*, and were not? That to prevent the Mischief of this, some had an infallible Capacity of discerning the real from the Pretenders? Nay, were not all the *People* call'd upon to try and judge, and Rules given them by which they shou'd judge? And were not these

these sufficient Grounds for the *Rule* laid down by the *Apostle*, without supposing that any who had truly the *Spirit of God*, did, in the same continued Discourse, mix the Dictates of their own *Spirit* with *his* ; and put them upon the *Auditory* as *his* ? which again I must tell you is an *Invention* of your own. Here therefore you acknowledge that these *New Prophets* frequently, in the same *Inspiration*, mix their own, or some other, *Spirit* with *God's*, thinking it to be *his* : And in Defense of this you allege nothing but a *Fancy* of your own ; not giving one single Instance of any *True Prophet* who ever did the like : And if this do not shew your *Prejudice*, I know not what doth. But, Sir, all this time you seem to have forgotten your declar'd Design, which was to prove from our *Saviour's* Prediction of the coming of *False Prophets*, that there must be at the same time *True Ones*. Now I desire to know whether our *Lord* by *False Prophets* understood such as were truly sent of *God*, but yet, in the same *Inspiration*, mix'd their own, or some other *Spirit* with *his*. If by *False Prophets* he meant such as these ; then doth he command us to reject such as these ; and consequently to reject those whom you defend. If he means not such ; then your *Argument* can signify nothing to your Purpose : since by *False Prophets* you understand such as you will not give us leave to think he understood. Again, you say, p. 8. The *False Prophets* in *Scripture* are such as you here describe your *Friends* to be : From whence I argue that the *False Prophets* of which we are forewarn'd by our *Lord*, and those of whom you speak are the same : And consequently it is our Duty to turn from them, as much as it is, to obey our *Lord*. This is sufficient in Answer to what you say of their mixing, in the same *Inspiration*, another *Spirit* with that of *Almighty God*.

I pass over what follows about the Possibility of the Appearance of *True Prophets* in these Ages; because I know no one who doubts of it: Only remarking, that the wonderful Effusion of the miraculous Gifts of the *Holy Spirit* upon *Multitudes* in the first Ages, cannot be proved to be an insufficient Completion of the famous *Prophecie* of *Joel*; unless you will make it so literal as that every individual Man in the World must be understood in it, as indeed your *Arguments* do. For the *Probability* of the thing; I find you are forc'd to recurr to that *Reasoning* which you so injuriously decry upon better Occasions; or to Passages in the most obscure *Books* of the *Bible*; not being able to produce one single plain *Promise*, or *Prediction* of our Lord, or his *Apostles*, which gives *Christians* any Ground to expect *Prophetical Warnings* in these latter Ages. I have observ'd already that *St. Paul*, and *St. Peter*, when they speak of *Christ's* coming, mention nothing of *Prophets* to forerun it, but appeal to the settled Rule, *The Day of the Lord shall so come as a Thief in the Night*; and prescribe the *Walking as Children of Light*, in all holy Conversation and Godliness, as the only Method of Force against the *Surprize* of that Day. And the *Midnight Cry* in the *Parable* shews the same, that we are to expect no *Prophetical Warnings*; contrary to what you and your *Friends* confidently affirm. For it is a *Cry*, not preceding, but accompanying his actual Coming; not a *Cry* of Preparation to engage those who were not before ready to prepare themselves; but only to call out those who were already prepar'd: as appears from hence, that it was of Use only to the *Wise Virgins* who were always ready; not to the *Foolish*, who wou'd have listen'd to the *Cry*, and would gladly have prepar'd themselves upon it, but that the time of Preparation

tion, and Conversion was past before this Cry came.

Thus much for the preliminary Part of your Book. I proceed now to consider more particularly those *Precedents* which, in the following Parts of it, you professedly urge from the *Holy Scripture*; in Justification of your *New Prophets*; which is my chief Design: That so we may judge, whether, in your Zeal for your Cause, you have done Justice to the *Antient Prophets* or to the Ways of *Almighty God*.

First, As to their *Agitations*; which you endeavour to defend from the *Examples* of the *Old Prophets*; without being able to produce one single Instance, as shall appear, to this Purpose.

1. You instance in the *Seventy*, constituted *Prophets*, Numb. 11. 17. and that their *Propheying* was something of *Agitation* visibly appearing in their *Bodies* you attempt to prove, not from any Expression looking that Way, but from *Joshua's* desiring *Moses* to restrain and forbid *Eldad*, and *Medad*; who, tho' not brought to the *Tabernacle* with the other *Seventy*, yet prophesied in the Camp; i. e. had *Bodily Agitations*, without speaking for *Edification*, or *Exhortation*, or *Comfort*. p. 32. for had they done this, you argue, he would not have desired them to be restrained. Excellent Reasoning! but that I know you despise. *Joshua* desired these Men might be restrained. You know not the Reasons he had for this; tho' *Moses* saith it was out of *Envy*: Therefore it must be because they had *Bodily Agitations*, which, you say, consider'd by themselves, are call'd *propheying* in *Scripture*. This is a Mistake. But the Point you ought to have proved was that the *Seventy Real Prophets* had *Agitations*: For you are to produce Instances of *True Prophets* speaking in the Name of *God* under *Bodily Agitations*, and violent Com-

motions. This you say is probable because *Eldad* and *Medad* had *Bodily Agitations* without speaking at all : And are said to *Prophesie*. Now all that is said of the *Seventy* is that they *prophefied* : Therefore this Argument, if it prove any thing, proves that the *Seventy* had no Sign of *prophefying* but *Violent Agitations*. For if by the *prophefying* of *Eldad* and *Medad* was meant nothing but *Agitation* ; then the same may be said of the *Seventy*, of whom it is likewise said that they *prophefied*. But to show you how weak your Argument is, read the *Verse* following *that* in which *Joshua*, out of *Envy*, would have had them restrained. You say, *Joshua* would not have desired this, had they spoken as *Prophets* for *Edification*, &c. Now in the first Place *Moses* tells us that *Joshua* spake out of *Envy*, which he could not have done had these Men been only *agitated* in their *Bodies*. In the next Place, That it was not merely *Bodily Agitation*, appears from *Moses's* Answer ; implying that he wou'd not forbid them, and expressing his Wish that all the *Lord's* People were *Prophets* ; not surely that all might have *Bodily Agitations* only, but that all might be even like himself. You may see plainly that if young *Joshua's* desiring this *Restraint* be any *Argument* that their *Prophefying* consisted merely in *Bodily Agitations* without speaking ; much more is *Moses's* refusing to restrain them an Argument that their *Prophefying* was not *Bodily Agitation*, but somewhat of so much Importance and Use that he did not think best to restrain it. See therefore from all this laid together what a Proof you have brought here of *Bodily Agitations*, from a Place in which there is not the least mention of them, and which it self confutes the Fact you would build upon it. But if you resolve to argue at the rate you do now, you may have proof enough of your Point ; taking

king for granted the Matter in dispute, and resolving that wherever you meet with the Word *Prophecie* it shall signifie *Bodily Agitation*. But this doth not become a *Gentleman* who speaks so much of *Critical Learning*. But, to proceed,

2. You instance in *Balaam*, who saw the *Vision of the Almighty*, falling into a *Trance*, &c. *Numb.* 24. 2. I know no one who ever denied that the *Prophets* were sometimes in *Extasies*, and *Trances*; as *St. Paul*, and others under the *New Testament*. But neither is this any thing to your Purpose. For your proper Business is to produce *Prophets* who taught, as *Prophets* under such *Agitations*, as your *Friends* have. But *Balaam* spake nothing of any *Agitations* at all; but only of a præternatural state of Mind in which the future Estate of the *Children of Israel* was, as it were, made present to his view. Nor was he in this State at the Time when he spake: But it was past: And in his *prophefying* he tells (without any sort of *Commotion*) the things which he saw in that State. How distant is this from our Purpose!

3. The third Instance is of *Sampson*, of whom it is said that the *Spirit of the Lord* began to move him at times, &c. *Judg.* 13. 25. which must be *Bodily Agitations*, you say, since we do not find that it mov'd him to Action. Now I'm sure, we do not find that it ever mov'd him to any thing else but *Actions* of great and marvellous Strength and Courage. I know not that he was a *Prophet*, or that he gave any *Prophetical Warnings*; or that the *Spirit* which mov'd him was ever accounted a *Prophetical Spirit*. But this we know from the following *History*, that every time it is said that the *Spirit of the Lord* came upon him, it was for *Action*, and for nothing, but to enable him for some stupendous

16 A VINDICATION of

Conquest: And from hence it is evident that by the *Spirit* of God's beginning to move him at times, is meant it's giving Presages, in several Instances, of his *future* Strength, and Exploits. This *Spirit* must indeed appear in some sort of *Bodily Motion* necessary to *Action*: But what this hath to do with your New prophetic *Spirit*, it is hard to judge, and I leave to you to make out. Your Business is to prove that God used to agitate the Limbs of his *True Prophets*: And you prove this by instancing in one who never pretended to the *Spirit* of Prophecie; but only to *Extraordinary Strength of Body*, when he was assisted by the *Spirit* of God.

4. The next Instance is taken out of 1 Sam. 10. 10, 13. where Saul met a Company of Prophets prophesying. i. e. say you, *having yet the Ecstatic Motions upon them*, and he prophesied likewise. Now this is taking for granted the very thing in *Question*; and arbitrarily, and without Proof, resolving that the Word *Prophecie* shall here signifie *Ecstatic Motions*. But will any one believe that these *Prophets*, exalted as they were, and elevated by the *Spirit* of God, said nothing all this time; but only were agitated in their Limbs? How unbecoming, how fruitless a thing is this? The *Text* mentions no other Motion but that of *coming down from the High-Place*: But you add your own Invention to the *sacred History*, in which there is not one Word of any *involuntary Agitations* of their *Bodies*; and make the *Spirit* of God come upon Saul merely to agitate his *Body*; and this because you are resolv'd it shall be so. For if *prophesying* signifies in this place only *Ecstatic Motions* of *Body*; here is a Company of *Prophets*, and Saul, possess'd by the *Spirit* of God merely for the *Agitation* of their *Bodies*: Which is a very absurd Supposition: *Propheying* therefore certainly signifieth here
the

the speaking by that Spirit which came upon them: Nor have you given the least Shadow of Proof of the contrary.

5. The next Instance is of Saul's Prophefying when the Evil Spirit from the Lord came upon him. 1 Sam. 18. 10: Now any candid Reader would interpret this of his Speaking according to, or by the Influence of, that Spirit which then was upon him: For Persons inspired by Evil Spirits are in Scripture called Prophets, and their speaking by them is styled Prophefie. This will be an easie Solution of this Place: But it doth not serve your Purpose; and so you give us a most incoherent Account of this Passage, and such an one as will not prove at last at all to the Honour of your Cause. 1. You say that this Evil Spirit was only a deep Melancholy; not any thing præter-natural. 2. This Melancholy was so strong upon him, it made him walk about his House frequently, and do other involuntary Actions (amongst which he thought his casting his Javelin at David wou'd be reckon'd) and agitated his Body after such a Manner, as the Bodies of Prophets were agitated, during the Spirit's being upon them: And that upon this Account only he is said to Prophefie, or, as the French Translation expresseth it more to your Mind, to act the Prophet. Now pray, Sir, consider what a Piece of History you have here invented. Here is no mention in the Bible of these involuntary Motions as Prophefings: Nor doth the Author of this Book pretend to give us those Particulars of Saul's Behaviour, which you, it seems, know perfectly well. Again, the French Translation will not at all help you: Nor is it of any Authority, if it would. For to act the Prophet certainly rather signifies to speak after the Manner of the Prophets, than to resemble them in any lesser Circumstance: Nor can he

18 A VINDICATION of

be properly said to *act* the *Prophet*, who doth not at all *speak*, which was the *chief* Business of a *Prophet*; but only is *agitated*: Even granting that *Prophets* were sometimes *agitated*. Nay, the utmost you can say upon your own Principles is, that it is possible that by *prophefying* here may be meant *Agitation*: But you can't deny but that speaking after a *Prophetical* Manner is possible, nay most likely, to be intended by it. This is your usual Fallacy, to take the thing for granted which is in Dispute. But, what is of more importance, please to observe what you have here advanc'd, *viz.* that *Saul*, by mere *Natural Melancholy*, without the help of any superior Spirit, acted the *Prophet*, or was moved and *agitated involuntarily*; (tho' you contradict this again by your owning his casting his Javelin to be *voluntary*;) and after such a Manner as that his Behaviour was call'd *Prophefying*. From hence therefore I argue that Persons may have what you call *Prophetical involuntary Motions*, and *Agitations*, by the Force of Nature, under the Power of a distemper'd Mind; without the Assistance of any superior Spirit, whether good or bad. Now how much your *Friends* are obliged to you for this, I leave them to judge.

6. Another Instance of *Saul's Prophefying* you also give us, out of 1 *Sam.* 19. 23. in which you only positively affirm over again that by *Prophefying* is meant only being *agitated* in Body: And so again represent *Almighty God* as sending his Spirit upon a whole College of *Prophets*, *Saul's* Messengers, and *Saul* himself, for no other End, but the *Agitation* of their Bodies. It must be confess'd that we cannot at this Distance be suppos'd to know the Manner of *Prophefying* in these Colleges; nor the Ends it serv'd: But who besides your self wou'd venture to affirm,

with

without the least Ground, that all their *prophe-
fying* was nothing but *Agitation*, without speak-
ing as *Prophets*, either in praising God, or ex-
pressing his Will: Especially when as yet you
have not produc'd any Passage in which *Prophe-
fying* signifies *Agitation*, unless we will take your
Affirmation for a Proof, against Reason, and
Circumstances?

7. The Prophet *David* is next produc'd; who
indeed *agitated* himself when he danc'd before
the Ark of the Lord: But that he was then
under *Inspiration*; or that he so much as pre-
tended to *Prophecy*; or that he was agitated
involuntarily, as you affirm, is contrary to the
Story, in which he is represented as doing it of
himself, no more under *Inspiration* than those who
shouted, and blew the Trumpet before it; and
defending it, when he was blamed for it, by
the greatness of the Occasion, and that he re-
joiced thus before the Lord; and not by any
impulse from the *Spirit of God*, which he might
as well have mentioned for his own Vindica-
tion, had there been any. This Action of his
is not call'd *Prophefying*; which is very much to
your disappointment: But we see by this how
unprejudiced you are in the Cause you maintain,
when you can snatch at such a *Story* as this.
Shew us, if you can, that *David* when he acted
the Prophet truly, and uncontestably, ever did it
with *Agitations* at the same time. This only
can serve your Purpose: But for this you have
nothing to allege but that his *Heart was hot
within him*, and while he was musing, the Fire kindled
and forced it self (as you have changed the
Words) by his *Tongue*. p. 37. Whereas he saith,
at the last I (not God) spake with my *Tongue*, an
Expression which your *Friends* deny to belong
to a true Prophet. This is all the *Agitation* you
can find in him: And yet here is nothing but

20 *A VINDICATION of*

a great desire expressed of venting his Mind : And this in such a figurative Way of lofty Expression as any human *Orator*, without the Pretense of Inspiration, might use. Nor indeed do I believe that you can so much as give the Shadow of a Proof that the *Tongues* of the *Prophets* were ever moved *involuntarily*, when they delivered their Messages, or *Inspirations*. For God always deals with them as with *Free Agents*. Some of them were permitted to contest their *Mission* with him. They always appear to do and speak as voluntarily as other Men : And generally are not under the *Inspiration* at the time they deliver it, but report what the Lord hath said to them, or what the Lord hath sometime before directed, or commanded them to speak : Which is a Way entirely different from that of your *New Prophets*.

8. In defense of their *Agitations* you urge that some *Prophets* cried out with a more than ordinary Force : And I know no one who denies it, when there was any Occasion for it. But what is this to the *Agitations* you are defending ? No more than what you subjoin, that *Elijah* ran before *Ababs* Chariot : At which time he was under no *Inspiration* : Nor was he moved *involuntarily*, but only assisted, in what he did voluntarily, by the Hand of the Lord which was upon him.

9. The next *Instance* of these *Agitations* in the *Prophets* you say, is that in 2 *Kings* 9. where *Elisha* the *Prophet* sends one of the Sons of the *Prophets* to anoint *Jehu*, p. 34, 35. in the Account of which you give us a fresh Instance of your excellent Talent at making *Histories* out of your own *Brain* ; and of your peculiar Method of arguing. Your Business here is to prove from the *Text* that this Messenger of the Sons of the *Prophets* had *Agitations* according to the

the modern Manner. In order to this you affirm, that he transgressed the Order given him by *Elisha*; that the *Spirit* of the Lord came upon him; and that his *Agitations* preceding it were visible: And this is the Way in which you deal with the *Holy Scripture*; than which I know not whether we can meet with any thing more unaccountable. For in the *History* it self, there is not one Word of the *Spirit* of the Lord's coming on him, which on such Occasions is usually expressed; nor the least Shadow of any thing like *Agitations* preceding (tho' what would this signifie, since all your *Prophets* speak under, and not after, their *Agitations*?) nor any thing to make us believe that he acted as a *Prophet* in his own Person, or as any thing more than the *Messenger* of *Elisha*. For if he had been design'd by *Almighty God* to have acted as an inspired Person himself, his being sent by *Elisha* with his *Errand* had been manifestly vain, and frivolous. But because there is something more in his *Message* than is expressly recorded as said to him by *Elisha*, v. 3. therefore, I suppose, you will make him an inspired Person, upon this Occasion, when you must know that it is usual in *Scripture* not to record every Word in such a *Case*, when the Words are to be repeated immediately, as this *Message* is, v. 6, 7, &c. But to shew you farther your *Error*, this Man himself calls what he says an *Errand* to *Jehu*, or a *Message* upon which he was sent: And delivers it all as such, after no other Manner than he would have done, supposing it only a *Message*, from *Elisha*. But what arguing can be of any Force against a Man who thus arbitrarily adds to the *Text*? It puts me in Mind of the Answer given by one of your *Friends* when Mr. L. was taxed with fixing a Word in one of his *Inspirations* upon the Prophet *Isaiab*.

22 A VINDICATION of

Isaiah which was not in him; viz. that the *Word* was once in the *Original* and drop't out, and now restored by the *Spirit's* direction to Mr. L. and after this rate you may prove what you please from *Scripture*, and fix what you please upon the *Prophets*. But I must not dissemble that you have another Argument to prove that this *Messenger* was under *Agitations* as a *Prophet*, and that is, his being call'd by the *By-Standers* Επιληπτικος (according to the Translation of the *Septuagint* which must be followed, to be sure, when it serves a Purpose) an *Epileptic Man* that hath *Fits of the Falling Sickness*, for so, or like to that, say you, it did appear to them: From whence you think it plain that he had *Agitations*. Now it is manifest that, whatever they meant by this *Word*, and whatsoever their Intent was in giving him such a Name, the Persons who use this *Word* did not so much as see his Behaviour: For v. 6. it appears that *Jehu* and he were in private: And v. 11. That *Jehu* came forth to the *Servants of his Lord*; from which it is plain that they were not Witnesses to the Behaviour of this *Messenger*; nor present when he spake to *Jehu*, either as a *Prophet*, or as sent by a *Prophet*. The *History* likewise tells us that he was not inspired himself upon this Occasion; but was only the *Messenger of Elisha* to deliver his *Errand* to *Jehu*: so that, upon your own Scheme, here is no Ground for *Agitations*. And from hence it appears that the only Reason those *Servants* had to give him that Name was the seeing him come in such haste, and with such Eagerness; and immediately fleeing away as soon as he had delivered his Message to *Jehu*. But that they designed by the *Word* they used to call him a Man with the *Falling Sickness*, is an Assertion wholly groundless and precarious, even your self being judge: Since they saw him

not

not act the Prophet to *Jehu*; nor any Part of his Behaviour, but his coming and going in very great hast, which hath nothing in it like the *Falling Sickness*.

10. The next is indeed an *Instance* very much to your honour, viz. that of the Prophets of *Baal*, who cried with a loud Voice, and leap't upon the Altar and cut themselves with Knives, which you say is call'd their Propheying 1 Kings 18. 29. Where it appears indeed, that their calling upon *Baal* for so long a time is called Propheying, from the Remark added that no Answer was made to them, but not that their Agitations are so called. Nor doth it necessarily appear that they acted an involuntary Part: However if they did, we know what Spirit possess'd them; and all that can be proved from hence is, that Prophets acted by an Evil Spirit have violent Agitations and Commotions of Body. But on the contrary we find *Elijah* not vying with these Prophets in Agitations; (in which they were likely to outdo him) but calmly calling upon God, without any Commotion of Mind or Body. The People, according to you, might justly have suspected that the Prophets of *Baal* had a more powerfull Spirit in them than *Elijah*. But it proved at last that his small still Voice, and quiet Spirit was Almighty God's; and their boisterous and tumultuous Proceedings the Effects of a very contrary Spirit. And what your Friends will get by this Instance, I know not; unless it be an Advantage to their Cause that they resemble the Prophets of *Baal* much more than they do *Elijah*.

11. The Description you next give us out of *Jerem.* 29. 26. is not of Real Prophets, but of those who make themselves Prophets. These are called mad: And we have seen enough in later Ages to make us think it a just Appellation: But

24 A VINDICATION of

But you have not given us yet *one* Instance of any *Established Prophet*, to whom the *People* were required to take heed, who was like a *Madman* in *Gestures, Motions, or Postures*; as you here express your self: And this at the time of his delivering any important Message from God; for otherwise your Cause will gain but little.

12. Now follows something which seems extremely to delight you, and yet wholly without Foundation. The *Septuagint*, it seems, translates the threatening of God to *Israel*, *Hosea*. 8. 7. to import that *Israel* should be tormented, *ὡς ὁ πνεύματος ἁγίου ὡς ἀνθρώπου ὡς ἀνθρώπου* like a Prophet in an Ecstasy; like a Man carrying or carried off, the Spirit. Now in the first place you do not so much as pretend that this is agreeable to the *Hebrew*. In the next Place, we find it quite otherwise in all other Translations except one. And in this Translation it seems evident that it must be understood of such Prophets as were possess'd and agitated by an Evil Spirit: Unless we can suppose that a True Prophet can come and tell the People of *Israel* that they shall be afflicted and punished by God as terribly as he afflicts and torments his own True Prophets: Than which nothing is more absurd. Especially since it appears that they could not but think the Condition of a True Prophet both happy and honourable. Can any one imagine that *Hosea* should come and tell *Israel*, God shall torment you as he doth me who am his Prophet? But I need not go any farther for a Confutation of this absurd Thought than to the next Page, in which you tell us that your Prophets in Ecstasy, and under the most violent Agitations, have their Souls filled with Light and Joy; and acknowledge them to be exceedingly delightfull. How therefore can you think that

God

God should threaten Israel to torment them as a prophet in ecstacy is tormented, that is, according to your self, to threaten them with a Blessing? To threaten them with Light, and Joy, and Delight? Doth God Almighty use to take his Representations of Misery from what hath no Misery in it? Who would not wish to be thus tormented, if what you say be true? Thus you are so kind as to furnish us with a sufficient Answer to you; tho' we should not be able, at this distance of time, to give an exact Account of every thing, or every Word, with which a Man of your Learning can puzzle this Cause.

13. Nor shall *Jonah* escape: But he must likewise have his Agitations. And why? Because his Preaching had Effect: As we cannot suppose it would so soon have had, unless the *Ninevites* saw something extraordinary in his Manner, and particularly, Agitations in his Body. p. 36. By the same Argument any one may prove what they please of the Prophets; that *Jonah* came into *Nineveh* upon his Head, or the like: For there must be something strange in his Manner; and why not that, as well as any other sort of Bodily Agitation? I doubt not but he gave the People of *Nineveh* sufficient Proofs of his being sent by God. The Knowledge they might have of his having been wonderfully preserv'd in the Belly of a Whale, and thrown upon dry Land, was sufficient to allarm them into a Work which themselves seem to have thought necessary. By your Supposition you plainly allow that all the Circumstances of his Conduct are not recorded. If not; then it is a thousand times more probable, if you will go to Invention, that he did some Miracle visibly and openly before the People, than that he had Fits of the Falling Sickness, or any such Behaviour, as, you say your self, makes the Spectators at first take Men for

Mad-men, and not for *Prophets*. But it is manifest that they immediately took *Jonah* for a *True Prophet*: And therefore it is plain, there was nothing in his *Conduct* so shocking, and so like *Madness*, as you acknowledge these *Agitations* to be. But, without all this, how can you answer to *God* the using such *Arguments* as this, and adding, after this free *Manner*, to the *Books* of his *Prophets*? *St. Peter* converted *three thousand* at once. As you say therefore, in the *Case* of *Jonah*, let any one try amongst *Infidels* whether he can do the like with the *Words* used by him. But doth it therefore follow that *St. Peter* had *Bodily Agitations*? You need not seek far for *Arguments* to support your *Cause*, if your *Judgment* direct, and your *Conscience* permit, you to do it with such as these.

14. Not content with these *Instances*, you say that *St. Peter* expresseth as much, *2. Pet. 1. 21.* viz. that *Holy Men of old spake as they were moved* (you change it into *forcibly carried*) *by the Holy Ghost*. Now it is manifest that *St. Peter* meant no more in that *Place* but that the *Prophets* of old were influenced in their *Minds* by the *Holy Ghost*: And that they spake agreeably to this *Internal Influence*: And therefore that none of their *Prophecies* are to be looked on as human private *Conceptions*, but to be interpreted as the *Voice* of that *Holy Spirit*. Besides, the utmost that can be meant here according to your self is, that the *Spirit* forced them to speak what they did, and that they had not the *Command* of their *Tongues*. But what is that to those *Bodily Agitations* concerning which we are speaking?

But that even this cannot be the meaning of the *Apostle*, I argue from that *Text* of *St. Paul* (here quoted, p. 36. and grossly misunderstood by you) *The Spirits of the Prophets are subject to*

the Prophets; in which you would make him say only this: that their *Human Spirits* ought to be subject to them; not that they can command their Tongues, or their Bodies, in their *Prophesying*s. Now, 1. The Word *Spirits* must in this Discourse of the *Apostle* all along signify the extraordinary Communications of the *Holy Spirit*, not their own humane Minds. 2. Their *Gifts* of the *Spirit* are all along spoken of as what could be regulated and managed by themselves. 3. This very Maxim is laid down in order to this Regulation: Particularly they are directed to speak after one another; to prophesy one by one; to leave off speaking at such a particular time: And he assures them they may do this; that they can, if they will, thus manage themselves under the Influences of the *Spirit* which moved them. So groundless is it in you to say p. 8. that this Maxim is laid down to keep them from mixing their own *Human Spirit* with the *Divine*; of which there is not the least Word in this Chapter: And so contradictory to the *Apostle's* Design is it for you to say that the *Bodily Members* of the *Inspired Prophets* are not at their command, when this Maxim is laid down on purpose to let them know that they might regulate their *Tongues*, and speak, and stop, as it should appear most for the *Order*, and *Edification* of their *Assemblies*. If therefore your Friends cannot possibly govern their *Tongues*, let them know that the *Spirit* by which they are moved is not the *Spirit* of the *Prophets*: For that is Subject to the *Prophets*, and doth not forcibly and irresistibly move their *Tongues*. *Jeremiah* might, as you urge, represent it as *Fire in his Bones*, and *Elibu*, as *Wine that hath no Vent*: Which are only figurative Expressions, signifying a great Uneasiness within them: But not any thing irresistible moving their *Organs* of Speech;

much less any other Parts of their *Bodies* : As appears from the Behaviour, both of *Elibu* himself, *Job.* 32. 11, 12. who *restrained the Spirit* he is there speaking of, and kept in the very things he afterwards produceth ; merely out of a Regard to Order and Decency, that he might not seem to think himself wiser than Men of greater Age and Experience ; and of *Jeremiah*, who in the Place referr'd to, *Ch.* 20. 9. had once resolved not to speak in the Name of God any more, which it is impossible he could have been so weak as to have done, had he known any thing of these *involuntary*, and irresistible Motions. Nay, it is manifest that he did *forbear* for some time, from the Expression *I was weary with forbearing* : And that all that he here intends is such an *Uneasiness* as determines a voluntary Agent to Action.

15. You go still farther, and venture to add to the *History* of the *New Testament* likewise, by affirming that the *Apostles*, on the Day of *Pentecost*, had *Bodily Agitations* : Otherwise, say you, the People could never have taken them for a Parcel of drunken Men. You had much better have said plainly, *Otherwise our Cause cannot be served* : For rather than that shall suffer, I see the *Apostles* themselves shall not be spared. And yet neither will this do : For in order to vindicate your *Prophets*, you must prove that the *Apostles*, when they spake, or wrote, for the *Edification* of the Church, were under these violent *Bodily Agitations* of which your *Friends* boast so much. This you don't so much as venture to insinuate : And indeed what you here pretend to, is a mere *Aspersión*, making the *Prophets* of God, like the *Prophets* of *Baal*. I wonder you did not, upon the same Ground, prove that the *Apostles* at this time were *Heart-sick*, and *Stomach-sick*, as your *Prophets* seem to be ; and that they had the other *filthy*
Signs

Signs of *Drunkennes* accompanying this *Sickness*: For this appears full as plainly as what you say. But to go still farther; a Man of your reading cannot but know that *Eli* thought *Hannab* had been drunken merely because her *Lips* moved, but her *Voice* was not heard, 1 *Sam.* 1. 13. and a Man of your Parts might think it very possible for ordinary People at first hearing to think those drunken who were talking what to them was unintelligible *Fargon*. But if you can give your self the Trouble, with all your *Prejudice*, to read the whole *Story* (*Ab.* 2.) attentively, you will find, what you seem not to know at present, that to those *Foreigners* then at *Jerusalem* who understood the Languages spoken, and convers'd with one another upon this wonderfull Occurrence, the *Apostles* had no Sign of *Drunkennes*. These Men were far from suspecting any such thing; as they likewise might have done, had they seen such *Bodily Agitations* as you would fix upon them: But acknowledged they heard them (not in Languages half-formed, not by abrupt Pauses, and indecent Eructations, but) speaking, in their several Languages, so as that they plainly understood them, the *Wonders*, or great things, of God. If you proceed to the 13. *Vers*e, you will find that, not *these*, but *others*, who understood them not, hearing them sound forth what seemed *gibberish* to them, upon this Account at first said *They were full of new Wine*: In which hasty Aspersions, I say, *they* not joining who understood the Languages spoken, it is manifest they saw no Sign of *Drunkennes* in them. For if they had seen them *reeling* about, and *agitated*, as your unhandsome Supposition is; they were not so prejudiced in their *Favour* as to have past it over, merely because they spake of God's *Wonders*, as many in *Drunkennes* are known to do. Add to this that the *History* which speaks

30 A VINDICATION of

Particularly of the *rushing great Wind filling the House*, v. 2. and of the *Place where they were assembled being shaken*, Ch. 4. 31. would not have past over in silence so remarkable a *Circumstance* as this, had they themselves likewise been *shaken*, and *agitated*. But enough of this, till you can produce some *Authentic Copy* which expressly mentions these *Agitations*; or some *New Revelation* to add your *Invention* to this Part of *Scripture*, as Mr. L. hath done to the *Prophet Isaiah*. Till you can do this, your positive *Affirmation* that it must have been their *Staggering or Reeling* that made the People pass that *Judgment* upon them, will serve to convince us of nothing, unless it be of your own *Prejudice*, and *Romantic Boldness*, in a very sacred and forbidden Instance.

Thus have you given the Reader, (if he will believe you,) a *Scripture-Account* of the *Agitations* which were constantly the *Attendants* and *Testimonies* of the *Presence* of the *Prophetic Spirit*: p. 37. Whereas it is evident from what goes before, that you have given us nothing but your own *Inventions*; and not a single Instance of any one *Established Prophet*, who ever delivered any one important *Message*, under such *Agitations* as you are now defending; that in order to prove your Point you have shamefully, and not like a *Scholar*, in some Cases supposed, against manifest Proof, that *Agitation* is called *Prophecy*, which is the taking the thing for granted which is to be proved; that in others, for want of Proof, you have unworthily added to the *Scripture-History* your own *Inventions*; that in others you have grossly contradicted your self, and your own Principles: And that in all you have shewn your self above the *Rules* of *Criticism*, and *Reasoning*; and above the *Humility* which you so much preach to others in the handling the Word of God. And how shall we account for this in a

Gentleman who pretends to an extraordinary Degree of Learning especially in sacred Matters; and is so free in his *Censures* upon those, who, I doubt not, have it in their Power to shew themselves superior to him in the Cause they have undertaken? This may suffice in *Vindication* of the *Antient Prophets*, and *Apostles* from the *Imputation* of their being *Precedents* for your *New Friends*, in their *Agitations*, and *Bodily Commotions*. I proceed

Secondly, to the *Prophetical Use of Signs*: And that *Almighty God* did by his *Prophets* make use of several *Signs*, as well as *Words*, to express his *Will*, I know no one who denies. But I must add here two or three *Observations* upon this *Subject*. As, 1. It is evident that the *Reason* why *God's Prophets* ever made use of *Signs*, was because it was a thing customary, and agreeable to the *Genius* of those *Nations* in which they appeared: Great use being of old made by Men as well of *Signs* in their *Actions*, as of *Parables* and *Fables* in their *Words*. 2. From hence it appears that neither you, nor any one else, ought to think and represent that as ridiculous, which we cannot be judges of at this distance of *Time*; and which, tho' it be disagreeable to the *Genius* of the present Age, yet might be very well adapted to the *Ways* and *Manners* of the past. This is a *Rule* allowed of in all ordinary *Cases*: And therefore certainly ought to be allowed of in a *Case* of great and extraordinary Importance. 3. An Argument may be drawn from hence to make it probable (if you will allow me to say so with all Humility) that *God Almighty*, supposing him to speak to us by *Prophets*, would not make use of that Method, which yet was adapted to others of old; because the *Genius*, and *Customs*, of *Nations*, in this Part of the World, are so extremely different from those of former *Nations* in the *Eastern*, and other Parts:

Parts : As we find, likewise the *Style* and *Manner of speaking* to be. 4. This may be confirmed, and, I think, made even more than probable, from the *Genius* of the *Christian Religion*, which seems to have put a Stop to all *Enigmatical*, and *Typical* Representations of the *Will of God* : And entirely to have gone off, in the delivery of that Will, from such Ways as were in use amongst some of the *Old Prophets*. And 5. I must observe that it is a great Prejudice against your *New Friends*, who pretend to be *Christian Prophets* that they are so entirely different, in this Respect, from the *Methods* of *Christ*, and his *Apostles*. For you cannot produce any one Instance of an *Inspired Person* under the *New Testament*, (excepting that of *Agabus*, who was of an *Inferior Rank* of *Prophets*;) making use of such *Signs* : Much less delivering a *Message* of *Universal Importance*, or speaking to *Edification*, or *Comfort* (as you sometimes express the *Business* of a *Prophet*) by *Signs* or *Representations* ; God having manifestly chosen the most plain and useful Way of speaking by his *Messengers* under the *New Testament*.

Our Lord indeed doth upon several Occasions make use of *Parables*, sometimes for the just Punishment of those who had stood out against other Methods ; sometimes for extorting a Confession of the Truth from his very *Adversaries* ; sometimes to make the greater Impression (as it may be in particular Instances) upon the Minds of the Hearers. But how plainly hath he delivered his great *Message*, and that *Will of God* which concerns the *Salvation* of Men ? And in this how plainly have his *Apostles* followed him ? Nay, in what he predicts whether concerning *Destruction*, or *Happiness*, he makes use of no such *Signs*, as the *Prophets* of old : Nor do any of his *Apostles* after him.

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However this be; I dare say your *New Friends* will never suffer in the Opinion of any considering Man, for any *Signs* used by them, if it can be proved from sufficient Arguments that they were commanded, or forced by *Almighty God* to use such Representations. By their *Shakings*, or *Agitations*, which are general, you say, *Almighty God* signifies that he is coming to shake terribly the *Earth*, &c. p. 43. But how unlikely a Matter is this, when you your self affirm that this was always the constant Attendant, and Sign of the Presence of the *Spirit of Prophecy*; on whatever Messages the Prophets were sent, whether of *Blessing*, or *Cursing*. For that *God* should make use of a *Sign*, to signify a peculiar Act of his Displeasure, which these *Prophets*, according to you, would have had, tho' they had spoken of nothing but *Blessing*, and which they must have had whatever their Message had been, and which they actually have when they pronounce the greatest Blessings, will be incredible to all who understand the Nature of *Signs*, and have not cast off their Reason under the Pretence of *Humility*. Besides, we know that the *Prophets* spoke of *God's shaking the Kingdoms* of this World; nay, we know that the *Apostles* spoke of this same *Shaking*, not only the *Earth*, but the *Heavens* also: But we neither read that they made their own *Agitations*, or *Shakings*, the Sign of this; nor indeed that they had the least Sign of *Agitation* or *Shaking*, about them. We have seen indeed, in these last Ages, another set of Men, before your selves, agitated in their Bodies; and denominated from their *Shakings*, and *Convulsions*, which have been equal, in many Instances, to those amongst you: But we have seen how groundless the Pretences to the *Spirit*, founded upon these *Agitations*, have been: Nay, it is to be hoped, they have, in
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34 A VINDICATION of
great Measure seen it themselves. But, to proceed,

Thirdly, That the *Prophets* do sometimes represent *God* as speaking in his own Person I know no one, who ever doubted: But all the *Instances* you have produced, p. 46. (the like to which you might have produced by *Hundreds* if you had pleased) come not up at all to the Manner used by your *Friends*: And consequently shew no Resemblance in this to the *Antient Prophets*. For tho' there be not immediately preceding these *Passages*, the *Form*, *Thus saith the Lord*; yet, if the *Reader* will please but to turn to the Beginning of the *Prophecies*, or of the Verses preceding these, he will be satisfied, that the *Prophets* did not speak these *Passages* at the very time when they were under the *Inspiration*, or *Vision*: But that they are *Accounts* given to the *People* of what had been formerly seen by them in *Visions*, or represented to their Minds by *Almighty God*; which they might make, without doing any Injustice to *God*, either in the *third Person*, speaking of him, or in the *first*, introducing him as speaking of himself, without the least Alteration of what was said to them. As in giving an Account of what any Man hath said to us, we perfectly, and equally, Answer the Design, whether we retain the *first Person* in which he spoke; or use the *third Person* instead of it. But what is this to the justification of those, who under the *Inspiration* speak as *God* entirely, which is very different from the Way of the *Antient Prophets*, and much more from that of the *Apostles*, and *Embassadours of God* under the *New Testament*. Add to this that the *Prophets* using the *third Person*, and speaking of *Almighty God* in the same *Prophecy* in which they speak in the *first Person*, is a Demonstration that they were not as *Pipes thro'* which *God* himself forcibly spake these

these very Words to the People; for then *all* must have been in the *first* Person: But that they were *Rational* Representers of what God had shewn to themselves; and free to chuse either the *third*, or *first* Person as they saw fit. And of what Force can this be towards the Justification of those, who by their own Profession, are no more the *Prophets* of God than so many *Trumpets* would be, thro' which God immediately speaks to the *Auditors*; and whose Words consequently ought always to be in the *first* Person: Tho' I know not how it sometimes comes to pass that your *New Prophets* forget themselves, and speak of God in the *third* Person. For tho' the *Old Prophets* might, very consistently with themselves, use either the *first* or *third* Person, because they pretended to no more than to represent faithfully to their *Auditors* what God had signified to them; yet it is highly absurd in your Friends, to use any but the *first* Person, because you pretend that God doth not signify his Will to them, to be represented by them to others; but that he himself immediately speaks to the *Auditors*, and forcibly makes use of their *Organs* to convey his own Will to them.

Fourthly, you proceed, p. 47. to justify from *Former Precedents*, their speaking, or rather, as you say, God's speaking to themselves, by their own Mouth. And for this you produce *Isai. 20. Jer. 36. Ezek. 3. Hosea. 1.* and you might, if you had pleased, have produced an hundred more passages: only taking for granted the thing in dispute, after your usual Manner, that the Lord's speaking to the *Prophets*, is vocally speaking to them by forcibly moving their own *Organs* of Speech, and using their own Mouths, to speak to themselves. If you had been so disposed, you might have proved, from that *Chapter* of *Isaiah*, that God spake

to

36 A VINDICATION of

to *Isaiab* by the *Hand* of *Isaiab*, as it is in the *Original*, and not the *Mouth*: And you might with as much Justice have kept to the *Letter* of the *Text* in one *Case* as in the other. For who, but one byals'd to this particular *Cause*, would not easily acknowledge that by *God's speaking* to a *Prophet*, and by the *Word* of the *Lord* coming to him, is signified only his making known his *Will* to him; not the vocal pronouncing such and such *Words*? And who would not own, that in all *Cases*, where it is plain that *Words* were audibly pronounced, it is as plain that the *Person spoken to* was not the *Person speaking*? But I must not here forget to mention a new Instance, produced by a Patron of this *New Dispensation*, since the writing of this: viz. that of *Zeechariah*, thro' whose *Organs*, we are now informed, an *Angel* spoke to himself, because the *Hebrew* which we translate *The Angel who talked with me* may signify, *who talked in me*; i. e. if the *Context*, and *Common Sense* allow of it: For otherwise a possible, or usual, Signification of a *Word* is not to be taken. Now *Angels* are, thro' the whole *Scripture*, represented as talking with Men, just as Men do with one another, with *Bodies* visible, and with *Organs* of *Speech* proper to themselves: And were the same *Word* used about a Man's talking with *Zeechariah* it would be full as justifiable to interpret this of a Man's talking in him, to him, thro' his own *Organs*; as it is now to interpret it so of the *Angel*: Since their *Way* of talking with Men is ever represented as the *Discourse* of Men, with distinct *Bodies*, and distinct *Organs* of *Speech*. 1st. therefore, this *Interpretation* is most absurd, and unreasonable. 2. It happens likewise unluckily that the *Context* duly considered cannot possibly admit of it. For the whole is here represented as usually. Nay, the *Angel* is represented

sented as removing his Station more than once
Ch. 2. v. 3. 4. 1. 5. 5. Did he, I pray, leap in,
 and out of *Zechariab*? Or, had he a Body and
 Bodily Organs of his own thro' which he spake
 one Minute; and the next Minute had none,
 but was forced to make use of *Zechariab's*? He
 is represented as waking *Zechariab* as one Man
 is waked by another. 4. 1. And what is more,
 he is called the *Angel* who talked in him, as
 much when he had removed his Station, as
 before, particularly, 5. 5, 10. If therefore that
 Expression be used when it is impossible he should
 be in *Zechariab*, then the Use of that Expression
 cannot be the least Proof that the *Angel* talked
 to *Zechariab* in *Zechariab*. But this way of arguing
 is indeed a very sad Proof of the readiness there is
 amongst you to break thro' all Rules of Decency, and
 to make Nonsense and Absurdity of the *Holy Scrip-
 ture* it self for the sake of your *New Cause*. Thus
 much for *Zechariab*: And, as for these *Prophets*
 whom you have here alleged, it is so far from
 appearing that God literally and vocally spake by
 their Lips to themselves, that it doth not ap-
 pear at all that he did, at the time of *Revela-
 tion*, forcibly move their Lips to speak those
 things which related to others: What they do
 vocally speak not seeming to be spoken at the ve-
 ry time of *Revelation*, but after it, by way of
 Representation of what God had impressed upon
 their Minds before: tho' you indeed are pleased,
 (contrary to all Appearances from the Begin-
 ning to the End of *Holy Scripture*) to lay it down
 as taken for granted, after your usual Manner,
 that a Prophet is one, who speaketh not from any
 Impulse of the Matter upon his Mind, tho' ever so
 strong, but, whose Mouth and Tongue is over-ruled by
 a superior Power to speak that which doth proceed
 from his Lips. p. 76. I cannot imagine for what
 Reason; since it is fully sufficient to the Pur-
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pose of a Messenger, that the *Manner* of the Message be fully made known to him; nay, since in other Places you your self agree with Bishop *Stillingsfleet* who makes the *Formality* of a Prophet to consist in the *immediate Revelation* of something to his own Mind, or Understanding. Now according to your *New Definition* a Person may be a Prophet thro' whom, without knowing any thing of the Matter, God reveals his Mind to others: And according to the other *Definition*, such an one cannot be a Prophet, no Revelation being made to his Mind; but the *Auditors* are the Prophets, the Revelation being made immediately to them; as immediately as Words can be spoken thro' the *Pipe* of that Person. So inconsistent are these two Accounts which you seem to agree to; tho' your *New Definition* is indeed most adapted to your *New Dispensation*.

Fifthly, The next Point we come to, is the *interrupted Manner* of speaking the Words of God, in Use amongst your *New Prophets*, so that the *Auditors* can't understand them, before a *Scribe* who hath a better Knack, hath written them, and so reads them over again: In which you likewise pretend, that they bear some Resemblance to the *Antient Prophets*. And here we are ordered to throw off our *Reason* again, for fear we should be so audacious as to think so unworthily of God, as that he would speak what he himself immediately speaks plainly and distinctly; that those might hear and understand him to whom he immediately speaks. For it is God himself you say, who speaks; and not these Men: And that God *Almighty* ever speaks with Design to be understood, and yet after such a Manner that his Words shall not be pronounced so as to be clearly heard, let him believe that dares believe any thing that may but serve his own Purpose. But the Answer to every thing

is, *Who shall say to the Almighty, Why dost thou so? Who are Judges of his Ways?* At which rate of arguing every *Absurdity* and *Ridicule* may come in time to be put upon us for the Dictates and Will of God: And this because we are not sufficient Judges of all things relating to Almighty God. This indeed is certainly true, that his Ways in many things are far out of our Sight; nor can we possibly judge of all the *Reasons* and *Ends* he hath in view: But what then? Doth it follow therefore that we must swallow every thing as his Prescription? Doth it follow that we are *Judges* of nothing relating to him? Why then doth he himself subject his Revelations to our Trial and Judgment? Why doth he appeal to Mankind in some Cases? Certainly because he hath given them Faculties able to judge whether such and such Appearances be truly worthy of him or not; and because their Reward lies, not in believing every thing to come from him, but in receiving as such only what appears to our best Reason to be truly worthy of him, or to have nothing in it truly unworthy of his Nature and Perfections; which are to be the Guide of this Judgment. But, I pray, how come you your self so frequently to forget your self as to pretend to *Reason* about the Ways of God, and particularly, p. 57. about the Reasonableness of expecting *Prophe-tical Warnings*, with great Positiveness and Assurance, even charging God with a Defect in his Love, if he should not send *Prophets* before the coming of *Christ*; notwithstanding that we have from himself sufficient notice already for Preparation for that Day, and Assurance that it will come *as a Thief in the Night*? This I say to you, who have so much decried the use of Reason. But God Almighty never finds fault with it; nay, He requires it at our Hands by his *Prophets*,

40 A VINDICATION of

and by his *Son*. It is a *false* and *proud Wisdom*, disclaiming every thing that is not agreeable to the *Maxims* unjustly, and without *Foundation*, established by it, which he loves to confound. But a calm and unprejudiced Use of our best Faculties; an unprejudiced judging of the Truth of things, and Pretensions of Men; according to the best Light we have, and according to those *Notions* of his Perfections which *Reason* teacheth, is our indispensable *Duty*; and the throwing this *Reason* off, under what Pretense soever, leads to all manner of *Absurdity*, *Enthusiasm*, and, at last, must terminate in a general *Infidelity*.

You are pleased here to intimate that *Human Institutions* only should be in Obedience and Conformity to the rational *Rule* of the *Apostle*, *Let all things be done to Edification*: Whereas you would hide from the *Reader* that the *Apostle* is there regulating the Matter of *Divine Inspirations* and the Manner of Behaviour under them: And since he argues there That *God is the God of Order, not of Confusion*, he certainly allows us to be Judges of *Order*, *Regularity* and *Edification*; and enforceth it upon all *Prophets*, not only as a thing always in their Power, but always their *Duty*, that *Order* and *Edification* be the Rule of their speaking and prophesying. But it is not enough for you to misrepresent this Rule of the *Apostle*: But you go on to shew most learnedly and judiciously, that some of the *Prophets* had *Amanuenses* to write for them. So have many *Divines* now: And yet their *Auditories* neither hear, nor understand them, ever the worse for that. But the Point here was to shew that any of the *Prophets* of old, when they pretended to speak the *Inspirations* of *God*, ever did it with *Eructations*, and *Interruptions* in their *Voices*, so as that those to whom they were speak-

speaking could not hear, or understand the Words spoken. But when, instead of this, you tell us that in penning down their *Prophecies* they made use sometimes of *one* to write for them, it sheweth us, not only that you have indeed forsaken all *Regard to Human Reason* your self; but that you think all your *Neighbours* likewise have discarded *Common Sense*, to be capable of being imposed upon by such *Shadows of Argument*.

The following Pages, to p. 55. are taken up in proving that God cannot suffer honest Christians, who heartily pray to him, to be deluded, &c. by which Argument you may prove *Contradictions* to be true, unless you will suppose that no one in this Nation, is truly honest, and doth truly depend upon God, but your selves who believe in this *New Dispensation*. For if there be honest *Christians*, who do heartily depend upon, and pray to God, both amongst those who believe in it, and those who do not; then according to this Way of reasoning it must be true that it is of *God*, and it must be true likewise that it is *not* of *God*. But if both cannot be true, then are there some such Christians, on the one Side, or the other, in a *Delusion*: And consequently your Assertion is false. Nay, if you will not believe that *Almighty God* will suffer *you*, who do truly seek him, to be so deluded as to take that for his *Inspiration* which is not; how can others believe that he will suffer *them* to be so deluded as not to lead them to the Acknowledgment of his Hand in this Matter, when they make it their Business to attend upon him, and pray him to lead them into all important *Truth*? For it is as great a Crime not to believe in that *Dispensation* to which he plainly attests, as it is to believe in what he doth not truly attest to. And therefore if he may suffer as good *Christians* as any

42 A VINDICATION of

(which you cannot deny) to be so deluded as not to believe in this *Dispensation*, why may not he suffer *others* to be so deluded as to believe in it, supposing it not to be from him? The Case is equally reasonable, or absurd, on both Sides. Besides, by this Way of arguing, if there be but one of these good *Christians* who believes any *Dispensation* to be the immediate Hand of God, this is Ground enough for all the World besides, who believe him to be a good Christian in other Respects, to embrace the same Belief, without trying the Spirits, or being at any other Trouble: For as sure as God is (say you, with an Ayre of Assurance peculiar to some sort of Persons) such a *Christian* cannot be deluded. That God will suffer a truly honest *Christian*, who constantly depends upon him, to be eternally lost, thro' any failure in his Brain, I can by no means think. But that God will preserve such an one from all Errour, and especially in Cases in which *Imagination*, and *Constitution* bear a great, and perhaps to ~~him~~ an irresistible, Sway, I see not the least Shadow of Reason to believe: And most absurd are ~~the~~ the Consequences of such an Assertion. It is not hard, I see, to your self to conceive that God should suffer Mr. *Mason* to be so influenced by a Notion, with which he had possess'd his Judgment, as to come to have his Judgment totally disordered by it, p. 54. Now what was this in other Words but to suffer him to be deluded? Tho' you say it was not *Delusion* but something else. But was it not a manifest *Delusion*, or a partial *Distraktion*, before his total *Distraktion*? Did not God, in his Case, suffer a good Man to be as fully convinced of the Truth of what was false, as you can be of your *New Dispensation*; And is it any more unjust in God (of whose Ways I see you your self will dare to judge

judge when you can make your own Use of them) to permit some honest *Christians* to be *partially* distracted, than to suffer others to be *totally* so ; without making it the Ground of eternal Damnation to either of them ? And of this *partial Distraction* there are many and frequent Instances in the World : I mean of a disturbed Judgment, and a disordered Brain, as to some particular Points, without the least Sign of the same Unhappiness, as to *others* ; and this in such sort, that if *these* be not touched upon, all things appear to be perfectly right within.

I pass over the following *Pages* from the 55th. to the 75th. because there is nothing in them which either affects the *Old Prophets*, or is intended absolutely to justify your *New Friends* : They being spent in discoursing of the *Coming of Christ* ; and the Warnings which you suppose must precede this ; and some other personal Matters of no great Concernment to the Point I have undertaken, which is to consider the *Imputations* you have laid upon the *Old Prophets*, and the *Arguments* you offer from thence to prove that the Warnings we lately have had are the *Warnings of God* himself.

I should now proceed to the *Account* you give us of the several sorts of *Predictions* amongst the *Old Prophets*, were I not a little stopp'd by what you tell us p. 77. viz. *That the Spirit of God made the inspired under the Gospel, 1 Cor. 14. speak or pray in unknown Tongues, which they could not interpret, i. e. according to your Meaning in this Place, which They did not understand, when themselves spake them.* For I cannot forbear to take notice, as I pass, of this your great Mistake, into which your Zeal for your *New Friends* hath hurried you. And 1. It is very unworthy, and very absurd for you to say that the *Spirit of God*

44 A VINDICATION of

made these Persons speak in unknown Languages, unintelligible either to *others*, or *themselves*; when it is plainly *St. Paul's* Design in this very Place to engage them not to speak in these unknown Languages. 2. It is very evident therefore that the *Organs* of these Persons were not forcibly and irresistibly moved, but that the Management of them was left to their own Discretion and free Will. 3. It doth not appear that they were *inspired* at the time they spake; but only that they had the Skill, the habitual Skill, of speaking in strange Languages conferred upon them: For they used this to an ill Purpose blamed by the Apostle. 4. The *Apostle* himself could speak with *Tongues* more than them all, and without doubt *understood* them: And yet argues as if he himself might speak, or pray without *his Understanding* (as the Word is in our Translation) if he would: From whence it is plain that something else is meant by *unfruitfull Understanding*, than the Person's not *understanding* what himself said; as it is likewise, 5. Plain from many other Passages in this Chapter, that the Person speaking might himself be edified, v. 4. and consequently understood what himself said; that it was the *other*, the *Auditor* only, that was not *Edified* and this by not being capable of understanding what was spoken, and that the Case of the *Auditor* is all along distinguish'd from the Case of the Speaker. 6. How unlike is all this to the Case of our *New Inspired*, who pretend to the miraculous Use of *unknown Tongues*? For they have them only by Piece-meal, and sometimes by Half-Words; they cannot use them, or not use them, as they see fit; but are attuated and forced into the Pronunciation of them; and often know not in the least what they say themselves: Differing in all these Circumstances from *St. Paul*, and others who had the
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Knowledge of Languages imparted to them at the Beginning of the Christian Dispensation. But I come now,

Sixthly, To consider what your *New Cause* hath led you to say upon the several sorts of *Predictions* you mention, as in use amongst the *Antient Prophets*, and the several Failures you have pretended to fix upon them: Which is a material and principal Point.

I. You begin with such sort of Promises or Threatnings as are fulfilled in a Sense different from that in which those, to whom they were made, did understand them. As,

1. *Gen. 2. 17. In the Day that thou Eatest, thou shalt surely die.* Now how you can tell that our first Parents did not Understand this, as God meant it, if they had any Notion at all of *Death*, I cannot imagine. But however, the design of Almighty God was not that they should accurately understand what was the *Exatt* meaning of the Threatning, but that, by the *Threatning* Understanding something very terrible, they should be kept in their Obedience. Nor did the *Devil* speak any more Truth in what he said contrary to this, than in his telling them that they should be as *Gods knowing good and Evil*. When God fulfills his Word, in the Sense most worthy of himself, there is the least Failing: And therefore to allege such Instances as this, can justify no sort of Failures; for here was none.

2. God assures *Abraham*, *Unto thee will I give this Land*; 3. He promiseth *Jacob*, *I will surely bring Thee up again, out of Egypt*. 4. He promiseth *Phinebas* the *Covenant of an Everlasting Priesthood*. And these, tho' you are pleased to affirm the contrary, I doubt not, were all Understood, as they were fulfilled.

For, as to the 2. Why should we not think that *Abraham* understood the Promise of God to be made
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46 A VINDICATION of

to his *Posterity* and not to himself? We don't find that any Complaints were made by him of any Failing on *God's* part. Nay, It is very Evident that he did so understand them from a great Number of plain Passages; so plain that they ought to be produced here to shame your Prejudice, or your Blindness, in thus dark'ning the Ways of *Almighty God*. For the whole Procedure plainly shews that the Promise was meant to his *Seed*, and that He so understood it. *God's Promise*, I will give Thee this Land, in the singular Number, is very often explained by the Addition of the words, *To thy Seed*. And that it was usual to use the Word *Thee* when it was impossible to mean any thing by it but, *Thy Posterity*, and to speak of a whole Family under the Name of the *Head* only, needs no Proof. In this very Story, *Ch. 17. 2.* *God* saith, *I will multiply Thee exceedingly*, where nothing can be meant but that *God* would Multiply *Abraham's Seed* or *Posterity*: Yet you may perhaps imagine that *Abraham* might understand that *God* meant to multiply his *Person*. But this is not all. For whereas you represent the Case most fraudulently, as if nothing more had been said to *Abraham* but that *God* would give him the Land; on the contrary, the Promise was often explained so that He could not mistake it. *Gen. Ch. 15.* The Land promised was the Land then in Possession of other great and mighty Nations; by the Dispossession of whom only it could be free for his Possession: *God* gives him an Account, that *his Seed* was to be afflicted four hundred Years in a Strange Land *v. 13.* that after this they should be brought out of that strange Land; *v. 14.* that He himself should die in Peace, *i. e.* before that *Calamity*, and untouched by it, *v. 15.* that after that long *Calamity* his *Seed* should come to the promised Land, *v. 16.* nay, that the

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Possession could not, according to the Laws of his dealing with Nations, be transferred in his Days from the present Inhabitants, because their Iniquities were not yet full, so as to deserve that *Excision* by which his Posterity were to arrive at the Possession. What can be plainer? And, *v. 18.* The Covenant, or Promise is solemnly ratified in these Words only, *Unto thy Seed have I given this Land*: and then the Nations are particularly reckoned who were the present Possessors, and who were not to be dispossest'd in 400 years time, *v. 16.* And is here any room to imagine that *Abraham* could possibly understand this Promise to be made to himself, that he in Person should possess all the Land possessed by these Nations, after the Explication of the whole Procedure? Nay, that he understood the Promise of all that Land to be made to his Posterity, not to himself, is evident from *Ch. 24. 7.* where He quotes the Promise in these Words only, *Unto thy Seed will I give this Land.* Not but that *Abraham* himself had as much as he could desire for himself; and was looked upon by his Neighbours as a *mighty Prince amongst them*, *Ch. 23. 6.* which differs very much from your Representation of the Case.

3. The like must be said in the Case of *Jacob*, that it was as plainly signified to him, and understood by him, that God's Promise, *I will bring Thee up again*, viz out of *Egypt*, referr'd not to his own coming up alive. For *Gen. 46.* the whole Procedure is explained to Him. *v. 3.* God promises He will make of *Him* a great Nation in *Egypt*: Where by *Him* is meant, his Posterity, his Children then in being, for He himself had none after this: Which shews this way of speaking to be too usual to be misunderstood. *v. 4.* in which the Promise of bringing *him* up again is made, it is added, *Joseph shall put his*
Hand

48 A VINDICATION of

Hand upon thy Eyes, i. e. shall do the last Offices for thee, Thou shalt die in Joseph's Sight, than which nothing could be a plainer Declaration to him that he himself should die in Egypt where Joseph was settled. Accordingly, when He had seen Joseph, he saith, v. 30. Now let me die, which he would not have said, had He expected a living Part in that Promise. Ch. 47. He desires to be carried Dead, and buried in the Promised Land. Ch. 48. v. 4. He explains the Promise of the promised Land, and declares it to belong to his Seed and v. 21. He explains the promise of bringing him up again to belong to his Posterity. Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again into the Land of your Fathers. And Ch. 49. v. 29. He speaks of his dying then, when he was in Egypt, as of a thing well known to himself. What can be plainer therefore than that Jacob, as well as Abraham, understood the Promise exactly as it was fulfilled? And what can be plainer than that you have acted a very indifferent Part, in hiding the Truth from your Reader, and endeavouring to obscure one of the plainest Procedures in the Sacred History? And this to be done by a Man of Parts, and Learning; by a Man that knows the Bible too well, I had almost said, to leave room for any excuse for such Conduct! But we must hope the best, of a Man hurried by a sudden Zeal, and Warm'd by a New Scheme of Thoughts. And then

4. For the Case of *Phinebas*, A Man of your Learning cannot but know that by an *Everlasting Priesthood* could be meant nothing, in the then common Acceptation of the Word, but a very long one; and this either with, or without an Interruption: as it was indeed very long in that Family after a very short interruption. The Covenant of Possession of the promised Land, made

to the Seed of Abraham was an Everlasting Covenant, and Gen. 48. 4. for an Everlasting Possession. Yet was it frequently interrupted, and now hath been so for a great Number of Years. Besides that you know it was always understood that these Promises of Blessings to Nations, or Families, were generally under Condition of Obedience, and Regard to Almighty God: And no Failure was ever charged upon him, when the Failure was in the Conditions required. The Promise to Phinebas declared God's gracious Intentions towards him, and his Family: But there is no doubt, that he and others at that time understood it as it was fulfilled: As it is evident likewise that it was fulfilled exactly as it is reasonable to understand it. Nay, you might as well have argued that it was not Everlasting in the Philosophical Sense; and that the Promise being made to the Person of Phinebas, (as you say it was to Abraham and Jacob,) God failed in not granting to him himself an Everlasting Priesthood. But indeed these are very poor Observations: And it is manifest that these Promises were fulfilled as they were at first, and as they ought to be, understood. Nor have you any Reason to say otherwise, but that it may a little puzzle the Cause you are upon.

5. The Case of Josiah being kill'd in Battle, tho' the Prophets assured him he should die in Peace (2. Chron. 34. 27. 28.) is something, at first Appearance, more to your general Purpose: And therefore deserves to be considered. And 1. The Enquiry made of the Prophets was only concerning the general Calamity threatened to the whole Nation, on account of Idolatry, and other Sins: And therefore the Answer cannot reasonably be extended to deliverance from all Evils, but from those of that Calamity only; importing that it was God's gracious Design towards Him,

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that he should have no Part in it. This was what He enquir'd after: and there is no reason in the World why the *Prophets* should be supposed to answer about any thing but this. But, 2. supposing this should be a more large and comprehensive Declaration of *God's* kind Regards, and gracious Intention to preserve him from other *Evils*, as well as from that Calamity; yet no such Promise as this doth in the least imply in it that *God* will do this whether the Man will or no; but always supposeth that all necessary Prudence be found on his Part; and that he joyn his own Endeavours with *God Almighty* for his own preservation. Now *Josiah* Runs himself into Danger unnecessarily; unprovoked; nay, after repeated Warnings as from *God* himself. Doth any one, or did any one ever think that *God Almighty's* Promise to preserve a Man supposeth that he will do it against the Man's Will? *St. Paul* understood this Matter quite otherwise, who, tho' he was told by an *Angel* that not one Life should be lost in the Shipwreck, yet declared that unless human Help were used, they could not be saved. *Acts* 27. 31. So the Promise here, in the utmost Extent of it, only declares the mercifull Intention on *God's* Part, which can have effect only upon Supposition that no mad and willful Imprudence on the *King's* Part prevent it. In none of these Instances therefore is there any thing to justify any Failure in *Prophetical Messages*. If any Persons misunderstand a Promise, they must answer for it: But it doth not appear in any of these Cases, but that *Almighty God* exactly fulfilled the Import of his *Threatnings*, or *Promises*; and was rightly understood by the Persons concerned. Or if *Josiah* argued weakly from the Promise made to him; and upon that reasoning, ran himself into Danger; this no more affects the Veracity

racity of God, than if he should suffer a sincere Christian to sin grossly, who should run himself into great Temptation upon Presumption that God's Grace would be sufficient for him, because God had Promised it should.

II. You next come to other sort of *Predictions promissory, and minatory*: p. 80. in which you, and all are agreed that *Conditions* are always understood, or expressed: As God himself hath declared, *Jerem. 18.* This the *Ninivites* plainly understood, that *Repentance* would save them; else it had been the highest Absurdity for them to have set about it, contrary to what you here affirm. This *Jonah* himself knew: And this made him so unwilling to undertake an Office which some wicked ones might deride him for, when they should see the *City* still standing. The rest of your Descant upon this is all your own Invention: And tho' we can't account for all *Jonah's* Reasoning, or Behaviour; yet it is plain that the *Repentance* of the *Ninivites* was a public, solemn, outside Shew, as well as an inward Resolution of Change. But why *Jeremiab* should here be brought in as complaining, on this Head, of God's Failures, when he is the very Prophet by whom God proclaims how his *Promises* and *Threatnings* are to be understood, is very strange. He might be derided perhaps by some because the *Evils* he spake of did not immediately come, even before he said they would come: But he could not surely be derided by any, because a true *Repentance* had kept off the *threatned Evils*, when he himself assured them from God that it would do so. This Case therefore admits of the easiest Solution, as you say; because here is no Failure on God's Part, nor any Blemish upon the Prophet, if the thing promised do not come to pass, when the Persons concerned come not up to the Condition of the Promise; or if the thing

52 A VINDICATION of

threatned do not come to pass, when the Persons concerned come up to the Condition required in order to the preventing it. But I desire to know of you, under this Head, if *Public Calamities* are threatned over and over again, and the time precisely and frequently set; and no Alteration intervene; no such *Faith* or *Repentance* be seen as is required by those who predict these Evils; nay, the Want of these still as much complained of as ever, by the *Predicters*: And yet no such *Predictions* come to pass; what must we think of such *Prophets*, especially when they have frequently spoken of these *Evils*, not only as *Judgments* upon *Sinners* and *Unbelievers*, but as *Annunciations* to their own *Mission*? I should here dismiss this Head, but that you have pick'd out a *Case*, not to be solved, if we will believe you, without throwing off all Pretenses to *Reasoning*: And yet in my poor Opinion there is not a clearer *Case*, or one less to your Purpose, in the whole *Bible*. *Hezekiah* being sick, *Isaiah* comes and tells him from the Lord, *Thou shalt die, and not live*, or, as the *LXX* read it, *Thou art a dying Man*; (not a dead Man, as you express it.) Now, (if it may be thought consistent with *Humility* to consider the whole of this Matter, and not to think it praise worthy to believe any Contradiction concerning *Almighty God*;) I would affirm that here is no *threatning* in the *Case*, but only a *Message*, or *Declaration* to him, that his *Disease* was past humane *Cure*, and of such sort, that no *Hopes* of Recovery were left; as an infallible *Physician* might have said to him, you are certainly *dying* of this *Distemper*. Thus it is plain *Hezekiah* understood it, and not as a peremptory *Threatning* that he should die: Otherwise it had been the absurdest thing possible for him to have thought of preventing his *Death*. But he applies himself to God

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and not to humane *Art*: And God interposeth, and adds to his *Life*: Which shews sufficiently how he understood the *Prophet*. And thus methinks you your self might have explained it, since you rightly observe, p. 83, 84. that some *Prophecies* referr'd only to the *Series of Causes in the World*, according to which the *Events* would follow, if God himself did not interpose. But here your repeated Scorn of *Humane Reasoning* in general makes me put you in Mind that *Humility* and the *Use of Reason* are perfectly consistent: And that if some People had a little more of both they would not bring an *Odium*, and *Disrespect*, upon the *Holy Scriptures*, by representing the *Ways of God* as not to be judged of according to the *Rules of Humane Truth and Justice*; as if *Revelation*, and even the best *Reasoning*, were at irreconcilable *Enmity* with one another.

III. Next follow your *Thoughts* upon what you call *Decisive Predictions*: But I desire to reserve the last Place for them, and to consider here the strange and unaccountable *Doctrine* you have taught the *World* about your *Fourth sort of Prediction*, which you call an *Arbitrary one*, p. 84. in which you say, tho' the *Prophet* be a true *Prophet*, yet is it the *internal Purpose of the Almighty*, for wise *Reasons*, that the *Matters of it predicted* shall certainly not come to pass. Of this you say we have diverse *Instances in Scripture*: But you are not so kind as to pretend to give us more than three; and these I shall now examine. 1. The *Prophets of Abab*, who perswaded him, as from the *Lord*, to go up to *Battel*, come under this Head. Now, 1. It doth not appear that these were *Prophets* ever inspired by the true *God*; in the *Sense* in which we now understand the *Word*. They were 400 in *Number*: Doth any one think that there was such a *Number of Persons* at that time, to whom the

54 A VINDICATION of

People were obliged to attend? Or such a Number of Persons who were properly the Prophets of the Lord, when *Elijah*; in the Reign of this very *Ahab*, had declared himself the only one left, 1 *Kings*. 19. 10, 14? 2. They are called Prophets indeed: And so are all who pretend to speak in the Name of the Lord. But they appear to have been Professors, and Pretenders only, whom *Ahab* loved and often trusted, because they flattered him, and made it their Business to prophesy good concerning him: And therefore they are called *Ahab's* Prophets, v. 21, 22. not the Prophets of the Lord: And thus *Jehoshaphat* understood them to be, as is plain from his not depending upon them, but calling for a Prophet of the Lord, v. 6. whereas these are called Prophets only, v. 5. And it seems very probable that, in that State in which God often sent true Prophets, there might be many as well of those who had the preparative Education in the Schools of the Prophets, as of others who were no Disciples of True Prophets, who set themselves up for True Prophets, and acted their Part as well as they could; who yet were never the Prophets of the Lord; or inspired by him. And by such as these God often complains that both Kings, and People, were frequently misled. But, 3. here is not the least Proof that these Prophets had ever before been owned by God as his Prophets: But it is plain that they had likewise heretofore been contradicted in their Flatteries of *Ahab*, by *Micaiah* the Prophet of the Lord, v. 7. who always prophesied Evil, but Truth, concerning *Ahab*. 4. These pretended Prophets heretofore, upon whom *Ahab* often unreasonably relied, for the sake of their Court-Flatteries, against the Testimony of God's true Prophet *Micaiah*, God did permit a Lying-Spirit to possess, in a signal Manner, for his de-

deserved Punishment; yet in Mercy at the same time inspiring his true *Prophet* to tell him the Truth, if he would attend to it. 5. So that what is this Instance? It is an Instance of *God's* true *Prophet*, inspired with *Truth*, which the *Event* justified; and of *Abab's* *Prophets*, who never were *God's* *Prophets*, as far as appears, but always false Flatterers, inspired with a *Lying Spirit*. 6. *Micaiah* expresseth himself in a figurative, visionary, or poetical Manner: But all that was meant by his Account was, that *God* thought fit that *Abab* should be destroyed; and this by Means of those *False Prophets*, whom he had often prefer'd before *God's* *Prophets*; and that he permitted a *Lying Spirit* to do the Business. The same Account is given of *Satan's* appearing amongst the *Sons of God*, and undertaking to debauch *Job* from his Integrity; and of *God's* permitting him: But would any one say that *God* bore an active Part in the wicked Design of the *Tempter*? So is he represented by *Micaiah* as permitting an *Evil Spirit* to follow its own Inclinations in seducing *Abab*. And this a Man of your reading must know, (nay, 'tis what you put us in mind of sometimes, particularly, and very remarkably, p. 33. which I recommend to your own perusal;) that in *Scripture* all Events are ascribed to the *Lord*, and things which he only permits, represented sometimes as his Decree, and his Will. 7. What is here therefore of an *Arbitrary* Proceeding? Of an *Event* not answering the *Predictions* of any of *God's* *Prophets*? *Micaiah* was *God's* *Prophet*: And the *Event* answered his Words; and *God* inspired him with *Truth*, even when he had a Mind to destroy *Abab* by *Falshood*: But *Abab's* *Prophets*, Pretenders only to *Divine Inspiration*, are by a *Lying Spirit* inspired with *Falshood*. How plain, how easy, how natural, how reasonable is
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56 A VINDICATION of

all this Proceeding on God's Part? and how resolved doth he shew himself to leave no such Failures, no such Marks of *Imposture* upon his own true *Prophets*? Thus much for your grossly mistaken Instance of *Abab's* Prophets.

2. What you here lay upon Almighty God, is, you say, agreeable to what God himself tells *Ezekiel*. 14. Ch. 7. and this you make your second Instance of *Arbitrary Prophecy*. This is a Case indeed in which God speaks of deceiving a *Prophet*: But not of his forcing any to speak a false Message: And this not of his own *True Prophets*; not of those who are influenced by himself, and guided by his Rules, and particularly by the *Rule* here laid down, as appears from the Place. For, 1. By God's deceiving the *Prophet* is plainly meant, according to the usual Way of *Scripture Expression*, his resolving to permit that the *Prophet* who is willing to give favourable Answers to any *Idolatrous Israelites* shall be overruled by some *Lying Spirit*, and governed by some *Egregious Delusion*, in order to the greater Punishment both of *Prophet*, and *Inquirer*: As you know from your own Observations, p. 33. that a signal and exemplary *Delusion*, or *Deception* may be called a *Deception* from the Lord. As it might be said of a *Great incorrigible Sinner* who hath deserved it, that God will lay more *Stumbling-blocks* in his Way to seduce him, when in Truth this is only meant, that he will give him over to his own wicked Heart, and to the Temptations of the Devil: And as God is said to harden *Pharaoh's* Heart, as a Punishment, only by doing or permitting what would have that Effect, thro' his own Fault: And, to give a yet stronger Instance, as God himself is said to move *David* to a great Crime, 2 *Sam.* 24. 1. only by permitting *Satan* to move him to it, to whom the active Part is expressly attri-

attributed, 1 *Chron.* 21. 1. These Expressions were plainly thus intended, and thus rightly understood by the *Antient Jews*: And you your self can so understand them, when it serves your own Purpose. 2. That the *Crime* of the *Prophet* deserving this, was a voluntary, wilfull *Crime*, and not the speaking what he could not help, but was forced to speak even by God himself, (as you would insinuate) is evident from what follows, that the *Punishment* of the *Prophet* should be even as the *Punishment* of him that seeketh unto him, v. 10. which you hide from your *Reader*, but which will plainly convince him that this cannot relate to *God's* true *Prophets*, especially if according to your *Notion* of them, *God* himself speaks forcibly thro' them without their bearing any Part in it: For what Room then for so severe, or indeed any *Punishment* at all, for their speaking what they could not help speaking? The deceived *Prophet* therefore being here threatned with as severe a *Punishment* as the *Idolatrous Enquirer*, the *Crime* of the *Prophet* here must be as wilfull, and voluntary, as of the *Enquirer*; and cannot be merely the speaking a *Fallhood*, which, according to you, he cannot help speaking. 3. All this relates to that one particular *Case* of *Idolatrous* Persons coming to enquire, concerning the *Lord*, of *Prophets* professing to speak in his Name: And in this *Case* only he layeth down the *Rule* for all, both *People*, and *Prophets*, to govern themselves by: And therefore supposing it possible for *God* to bear an active Part in *deceiving* a *Prophet*; yet, it being declared in this one *Case* only, it cannot possibly be extended to any *Case* but this: Much less ought it to be represented as the ordinary way of *God's* dealing with the best of his own *Prophets*, and in those *Messages* to which the *World* is summoned to attend. 4. The Declaration

58 A VINDICATION of

claration of *Almighty God* in this Place is, that he will answer the Persons there spoken of, by himself, in contradistinction to his answering them by *Prophets*, v. 7. which is a plain Proof that the Persons pretending to answer them could not be moved by *God* to do it, or speak the Words of the Lord. And what Instance is this, therefore, of *Almighty God's* speaking Falshood thro' a true *Prophet*; and this by an arbitrary Will: When he declares he will not answer such Persons at all by a *Prophet*; and gives the Reason of his proceeding; and punishes the pretended *Prophet* as a presumptuous, willfull Sinner against him?

3. But there is yet, say you, a third Instance thereof more plain than the former. i. e. an Instance of a *Prophet* by whom *God* arbitrarily spake contrary to what he knew the Event would be. This is the Instance of *Elisba*, 2 *Kings*. 8. 10. who said unto *Hazael*, Go say unto him, viz. *Ben-badad*, Thou shalt surely recover: Howbeit the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die. On the contrary, I say, this is an Answer most exactly true, and exactly fullfilled by the Event. *Hazael* was sent to enquire whether *Ben-badad* should recover of his Indisposition: And to be sure was resolved to guide himself by the *Prophet's* Answer. If the *Prophet* had answered him that he would die of that Sickneſs, it would have saved him the Trouble of murdering him: If otherwise, he knew what he had to do. The Question therefore being wholly about his Sickneſs; as to that, the *Prophet* answers first, that he should recover, agreeably to your own Observation, concerning Predictions relating only to the Series of second Causes working in the World: And this was literally true, that he would recover of that Sickneſs; or that that Sickneſs would not prove mortal to him, which was the matter of Enquiry.

Enquiry. *Howbeit*, the Prophet adds to *Hazael*, Think not that I am ignorant of thy Design; For God hath shewed me that he shall surely die another Way, tho' not of this Distemper. This the Event justified: For *Hazael* immediately killed him, as soon as he knew that his Distemper would not. And what is there in all this, freed from your disingenuous Comment, but what is perfectly agreeable to Truth, and perfectly answered by the Event?

But to justify your self for imputing those things to the Ever-blessed God, for the like to which any Man would be accounted a Liar, you appeal to *Jeremiah* for saying that God had greatly deceived the People and *Jerusalem*, which is manifestly nothing but that God, for a Judgment, had permitted them to be deceived by those False and Flattering Prophets, not commissioned by God, of whom *Jeremiah* himself complains; and to guard against whose Impressions, he himself was sent by God. The Question here is, whether God inspired Falshood into any Prophets, and commissioned them to publish this Falshood: And in this Case, whether he inspired the False Prophets to preach Peace, and at the same time *Jeremiah* to preach the contrary: When *Jeremiah* was the Prophet whom he owned, and the others such as he disclaimed; nay, such as are said to bely God, Ch. 5. v. 12. and not to have the Word in them, v. 13. and to prophesie falsely. v. 31. and were These inspired by God? If not, how will you answer it to Him, to make them his Prophets, and deceived by Him, forcibly, and actively? When it is represented as their own Crime, and they are to be punished for it: And particularly affirmed of *Hananiah*, that the Lord did not send him Ch. 28. 15. and yet the People trusted in his Lie, *ib.* And in the Language of Scripture, God Almighty would be said to deceive the People
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60 A VINDICATION of

by *Hananiab* the Prophet, because in his Providence he saw fit to permit him to prophesy a Lie, which they believed and trusted to. This then being all the *deceiving* that can here be charged upon *Almighty God*, what is this to his actual inditing false Prophecies? And yet there are more Senses of which these Words are capable. For *Jeremiab*, thinking of the *Insatuation* of the People, trusting to Peace even amidst great Calamities, might well express himself to this Purpose, This belief of Peace is so great and firm, amidst all Signs to the contrary, that one would think Thou, O Lord, hadst indeed sent Prophets to prophesy Peace, since they could not, even upon that Supposition, more firmly trust to it than now they do. Or it may be very well read, by Way of Question, Is it possible that Thou, O Lord, shouldst have sent, or inspired those Prophets who have so greatly deceived this People into Thoughts of Peace? Is it possible that this Deceit should be from Thee, whereas the Sword reaches unto the Soul? But it is every way nothing to your Purpose, and every way opposite to your gross Interpretation; which is likewise directly contrary to your own Rule laid down, p. 75. (in which you seem to have been over-ruled for your own Confutation,) as it is such an one as is not warrantable from Scripture, or consistent with other Texts, and an Impeachment of the Truth of God.

But again, you allege that *Jerem.* himself was deceived, and God deceived him. Ch. 20. 7. Was *Jeremiab* then like *Abab's* Prophets? Or was he one of those Prophets, by deceiving whom, God deceived the People? Or, did he prophesy of any thing, which in the Event did not come to pass? Or was he one of those Prophets, so severely threatened by God in *Ezekiel*, for acting contrary to his settled Rule? If not, then this
Passage

Passage is nothing at all to your Purpose. Nay, but just now you quoted this same Passage to prove that *Jeremiah* complained of being deceived in those Cases, in which all allow that the Event depends upon Conditions, and in which God's Veracity is not in the least impeached. If so, then *Jeremiah* cannot be thought to speak here as if God had by him, after an arbitrary Manner, predicted what he knew would never come to pass: For this one Passage can't belong to both Cases. Nor can it indeed belong to either of them. For, supposing him to speak of God's deceiving him, it is only a Melancholy Complaint, as appears from the whole Chapter, of the ill Usage he had met with; and that God had as it were enticed, or over-perswaded him, as the Word signifies, (which may be called deceiving him) to take upon him a thankless and reproached Office; of which he sometimes repented him. Besides, the Words may be interpreted interrogatively, Hast thou deceived me? And have I been deceived? Or, by Way of Supposition, If I be deceived in taking upon me the Part I have, Thou hast deceived me: Which imply the contrary to what you would here fix upon *Jeremiah*. These Words therefore, being capable of a very fair Construcion several Ways, it is the most absurd thing, and contrary to all Rules of Interpretation, as well as to your own, to chuse such an one as makes the Prophet tax Almighty God of downright, arbitrary, Falshood; contrary to all the same Prophets serious Declarations; and which cannot be justified by one single Instance of such Deceit, in his or any other Case. Nay, that what *Jeremiah* complains of is vastly different from what you here fix upon Him, is evident to any one who can but read the Chapter, in which he complains not in the least of any Falshood which God had engaged him to

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prophecy; or of any Prediction of his own which was not answered by the Event, (the only thing to your Purpose;) but of *Derision*, and *Trouble*, more than he at first expected; and presently comforts himself that *God* was, and would be, his *Support*. And what is this to that *Arbitrary Deception* in *Prophecy* which you audaciously attribute to the *Father* of all Truth?

I must not omit under this Head of *Deceptive Prophecies*, what we are told, since the writing of this, in Justification of those *Failures* which your Friends are forced to confess in their *New Dispensation*, viz. that in the *sixth Chapter* of *Nehemiah* there are, at least, three *inspired Persons*, prophesying a *Falshood*. Upon turning to the Place I find indeed Persons called *Prophets*, or professing themselves such, pretending to terrify *Nehemiah*. But they were so far from being inspired by *God*, that they were inspired by nothing but *Mony* to say what they did: For *Tobiah* and *Sanballat* had hired *Shemaiah*, v. 12. I find *God* gave them no Marks of his Mission: For *Nehemiah* presently was able to see plainly that *God* had not sent them. *ib.* I find that *Nehemiah* was so audacious as to argue from *Reason* against the Possibility of *God's* sending them. But what Degree of Zeal for what they have once espoused must *They* have, who could put this upon the World as a Proof, that *God* forces *Deceptive*, or *False*, *Prophecies* arbitrarily thro' his true *Prophets*; or as an Instance of any *Prophet* inspired by *God* with a *Falshood*; or as a Justification of any such Failures in those who are truly sent of *God*? Indeed I see not how the great Enemy of *God* can well wish for a better Game than that such Representations should be made of the *Ways* of *Almighty God*; and of the *Falshood* of his *True Prophets*. But enough of this; of which I can hardly speak with the Severity it deserves. And

And now, not content with having thus perverted the *Old Testament* to your Purpose, you proceed to deal with the *New* after the same Manner, and ask, with an Ayre of triumph, if what you have before fixed upon the *Great God* be not agreeable to the *Gospel-Revelation*, wherein we are told that as for *Those who receive not the love of the Truth that they might be saved*, God shall send them strong *Delusion* that they should believe a *Lie*. It hath often enough been said, and you know it your self, that the most remarkable *Delusions* are called *Delusions* from God, in which yet he only permits, for the Punishment of those who deserve it, such *Events*, as in the End prove *Delusions*, and *Deceptions*, to them. But in this very Sentence God's sending *Delusion* to that Degree, that Men should believe a *Lie*, is plainly distinguished from his being the *Author*, *Framer*, and *Speaker* of this *Lie*, as you inexcusably make God to be. This was your Business, to shew that God himself ever spake what he knew would never come to pass, and this arbitrarily : And you quote a Text which saith that God, for just and wise Reasons, gives up some, who have stood out against the utmost Evidence of *Truth*, to a fatal *Delusion*, in order to their believing a *Lie* upon much less Evidence. What is here arbitrary in this? What is here of prophesying peremptorily of what is never to come to pass? What is here to make you *Father* this *Lie* upon *Almighty God*? These Imputations call for a serious Repentance : And it is not your private Evidences, nor your repaired Health, nor any of your positive *Affirmations* to salve the Honour of God, that can make Amends for these injurious and groundless Assertions : For so I hope I may call them, since I have examined every one, and found, and proved them so. But were it other-

wise; and could you produce an obscure Passage or two out of the *Old Testament*, of which we could not, for want of knowing all Circumstances, give so full an Account, but that it might look this way; yet how unfair, and unjust, would it be, to make this the General way of *God's* dealing with his *Prophets*, and with Mankind; when there are so many other plain Passages to the contrary, which assert that *Evidence* which he ever gives to his *True Prophets* above that of any *False* ones; which Establish that difference between *Him* and the *Father of Lies*, and *Delusions* which you have Endeavoured to confound; and which appeal to the *Rules of Truth and Justice*, received by Mankind, in order to the rational Trial of his *Ways*? a Trial which you have Endeavoured to Laugh out of Countenance; tho' without it there can be no such *Faith* as can be acceptable to *God*, or worthy of Man. But *God* be thanked, you have not been able, with all your Reading, and all your Zeal, to produce one single Instance of any Established *Prophet*, to whom any Persons were obliged to attend, by whom *God Almighty* spake any one *Prediction, Promise, or Threatning*, which was not answered exactly by the *Event*; unless in such *Cases*, in which you and all Acknowledge some *Condition* was expressed, or known to be Understood: much less any *Arbitrary Prophecy* of *Falseness* dictated by the *True God*; tho', in order to fix this absurdity upon *Almighty God*, you have taken hearty Pains; and even contradicted your own Rule for the right Interpretation of *Scripture*, laid down p. 75. and affixed without any Necessity, nay, against all appearances, such senses upon particular obscure *Texts* of *Scripture* as are contrary, I will not say to the best and most allowed Dictates of Reason (for that you despise;) but to numberless plain, uncontroverted *Texts* in other Parts of the *Bible*.

IV. I come now to those *Predictions* which are called *Decisive*: About the Nature of which we have no Dispute, being agreed that the Proof of the *Prophet's* divine Mission must be established, or fall to the Ground, according as these are, or are not, answered by the Event. Yet I doubt we shall, under this Head, very much differ from one another, in the *Application* of your own *Rule*. For you were so ingenuous as to Instance in two or three *Predictions* of your *Modern Friends*, and to put the whole of the Cause upon their *Completion*; which have notoriously and most remarkably failed. Notwithstanding this, you and others still adhere to this *Dispensation*: Nay, I find the very gross *Failures* in it are brought for an Argument of it's divine Original, it being more like the Ways of God for these Signatures of his *Authority* in it. Good God! that ever such Marks of *divine Inspiration* can be urged, which are the only Marks by which to know a *Delusion*! How unhappy is it for *Christianity* that our Lord arose again from the Dead, according to his Prediction! when, it seems, if he had not, there had been an additional Argument for his *Divine Authority*, to be drawn from this *Failure*. But alas, the poor *Apostles*, I doubt, had not understanding enough in the Nature of *Prophecies* to have made so good Use of such a Failure. Well, but it is said, that it was only by your own hasty humane Spirit that you made these things *decisive*, as Mr. L. the chief *Prophet*, did his *six Natural Months*. I desire therefore that you would give us an Instance of a *True Prophet* amongst the old ones, who ever did appeal to any *Sign*, as *decisive* by his humane Spirit, disagreeably to that *Divine Spirit* by which he was led; to any particular *Events*, saying publickly that he would own himself *deluded* if they came not to pass, and after-

wards found himself deceived by God? Or of any uninspired Person pitch'd upon by *Inspiration* to defend a whole Set of *Prophets*; and this such an one as should spoil their Cause by acting disagreeably to the *Spirit* of these *Prophets*, and by appealing to *Proofs* which that *Spirit* never designed should come to pass. These, you will say, are *Trifles*. But can you, or any one, say that the *Inspirations* amongst you made no such *Predictions* decisive, as have egregiously failed?

1. Consider how many of the *Inspired* predicted *Emes's Resurrection*, and the Day, and the Pomp of it. Nay, were there not *Visions* seen representing the whole Solemnity? As if *God Almighty* designed, in Mercy, by so remarkable a Failure to make you sensible of your *Delusion*? Now could there be any other Design in this than to give Testimony to this Dispensation; as our Lord's Resurrection was to do to his? It was neither a *Blessing*, nor a *Threatning*, depending on any *Conditions*, express'd or understood. If *Prayers* could have had any Effect, without doubt you have not been wanting to pray for such *Testimonies*. Our *Saviour's* Resurrection was not made more *decisive* by himself; nay I will say, not so much as this was by the inspired themselves. Neither was this spoken of amongst you as designed by *God* for any thing but to give Testimony to the *Prophets* themselves. And this is sufficient to make it a *decisive Prediction*; and the Failure of it a certain Proof that *God* was not the *Inspirer*, according to your own Rule. It was not your *Humane Spirit* only, but all the *Inspirations* which spake of it as a thing by which *God* would determine the *Authority* of this *New Dispensation* and, this failing, what need we look any farther? But, 2. The same may be said of Mr. L.'s *six Months*, which he could not be supposed to fix without *Direction*, as he thought,

from

from his *Inspirer*. However, this is certain, that the *Inspirations* have owned some Occasion for greater, and more open Attestations than any yet have been; and proclaimed *God's* Design, and Resolution, to do much more for the Conviction of the World than what hath been done already. It cannot be a Crime in any therefore to wait till these mighty Works shew themselves. Particularly, you your self p. 87. say that this Period was fixed and confirmed by six or seven under *Inspiration*; and give us the Words of a particular *Inspiration*, in which you are commanded to acknowledge *the Lord not to have spoken by this Voice, if open Miracles, public Attestations from Heaven* were not given within that Space of time. Could any thing possibly be made more decisive than this? In the same *Inspiration* there follows likewise the determinate time, beyond which God will not bear with Unbelievers: And can you produce any Instance of *God's* bearing with the continued Iniquities of a People beyond the Time limited in plain Words by himself? Yet hath all this, and much more failed: And now we are to be told, with little less than *Blasphemy*, that this is *God's* usual Way of dealing with the World. Lay therefore your Heads together, and, if you resolve to persist against all the *Failures* which you have met with; answer, if it be possible, to these few Questions.

1. Did God thus establish the *Authority* of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, by failing them in their most confident Predictions? Did he ever after this Manner set up any *Dispensation* in the World? Did he ever by any *Prophet* foretell any one thing, to come to pass, for the establishing the *Credit* of that *Prophet*, which did not so come to pass? Did he ever require of any Nation or People, to attend to the Message of a *Prophet*,
or

68 A VINDICATION of

or Number of *Prophets*, and promise by them such and such Attestations, such and such Proofs of their Divine Commission, within a particular time ; and then fail them, and still go on to require the *Faith* of the *People*, as much as if he had answered them ? Nay, what are the Instances which you your self pretend to produce ? Even supposing you have truly represented them, which I have shown you have not, are they, or any of them, *Instances* of God's failing to answer the *Predictions* of his *Prophets* in any *Case*, in which the Authority, or Credit of the *Prophet* was the thing aimed at in the *Predictions* ? No. But the utmost that can be said in their Favour is, that they are *obscure Passages* of *Scripture*, of the Meaning of which we, at this great Distance, cannot give a full, and complete Account. And shall we therefore fix *Absurdities* upon them ?

2. To what Purpose are such *Predictions* of *Attestations* ? For the Credit of the *Prophets*, or not ? Is it God's Design to convince the World of their *Authority*, or not ? If not, then it is absurd and blasphemous to suppose him speaking to this Effect, that his Design is to convince the World by such and such particular Appearances. But if this be his Design, then He cannot fail of accomplishing such *Predictions*, because he hath told us that it is by the Accomplishment of them that he designs to convince us. But if after this ; if after God Almighty hath proclaimed that he will by *these* convince us, and by *these* bear Witness to his *Prophets*, He can be believed to fail in these very *Instances* ; an this out of an arbitrary Humour ; it remains that no Absurdity, no Contradiction, no Indecency is too great to be believed of the Supreme Being.

3. If this be the Method of God's dealing, put the Case that an *Evil Spirit* should, in attestation to a *contrary Dispensation*, predict, and fulfil several things Exactly, without one Failure, what must the World do? or, which way must we turn our Selves? Is it come to this, that *Failure* and *Deception* is the *Signature* of God; and *Uniformity*, and a *Correspondence* of all Events, is left for the Mark of *Delusion*, rather than of *True Inspiration*? But *Humane Nature* is not so made as seriously to embrace what hath not the outward Appearances of *Truth*; or to attend to any thing as coming from *God*, in which all the *Public Marks*, to which appeal hath been made, have failed to that Degree, that you are forced your selves to have Recourse to the more private, to which you your selves only are Witnesses.

4. According to the late Way of arguing, in Use amongst your Friends, how can you possibly judge either of a *Revelation*, or a *Delusion*? If these main and open Proofs, upon which the *Inspirations* themselves laid such Stress, may fail; and yet the *Dispensation* be *Divine*: How shall we know what is not *Divine*? If these *Failures* be the Marks of *Divinity*, what are the Marks of the contrary?

5. If the Mark of *False Prophets* laid down by *Moses*, hath, as you say, Reference to these *Decisive Predictions*: Then how can you acquitt your *New Friends*, all whose most *Decisive Predictions* have egregiously failed? What signifie any other Proofs, if this *Criterion*, laid down by *God* himself, condemn them? Who is obliged to regard any other pretended Proofs?

6. If the *False Prophets*, of whom we are forewarned, be such as mix their own humane Spirit with the *Divine*; as you say; then are not your *Friends*, by your own Confession, of the

Num-

70 A VINDICATION of

Number of those, againſt whom we are forewarned, and to whom we are forbid to attend?

7. If they be of the Number of thoſe who are ſaid in *Ezekiel*, according to you, to be arbitrarily deceived by *Almighty God*, are they not conſequently of the Number of thoſe, againſt whom the Wrath of *God* is in the ſame Place declared, and to whom the *People* were not to attend?

8. If *God Almighty* may thus fail them; if they have prophesied Falſhood by his Inſpiration, or by the Mixture of their own Spirit with his; if it be ſo common a thing for *Almighty God* thus to deal with the World; How do you know, or how can you poſſibly aſſure us, or your Selves, that your main Meſſage is not a Falſhood, or a Deluſion likewise? How can you prove that the Day of the Lord is coming at this particular time? May not *God* arbitrarily deceive in *this*, as well as in other *Predictions*? Former *Predictions* concerning it in antient *Prophets* cannot convince you, becauſe, you ſay, it was the Way of *God* to amuſe the World with arbitrary, and deceptive *Propheſies*, of which *this* may be one as well as any other you can Name. And your own *Predictions* can ſignify nothing, becauſe theſe You have found not answered by the *Event* in many Inſtances, as *decifive* as any can be made. Again,

9. Your Inſpirations have Professed that in Order to prove your *Prophets* ſent on this Meſſage, great Miracles ſhould be done in ſuch a Time; and a particular Perſon raiſed from the Dead on ſuch a Day. Now, if thoſe Proofs which were Promiſed for no other End but to convince us of this have failed, then your *Decifive Predictions* have failed. But thoſe Proofs or *Signs* which were promiſed, and ſpoken of, no otherwiſe than as what *God* thought wanting for

for the Conviction of the World have failed : Therefore your *Decisive Predictions* have failed : And therefore, by your own and *Moses's Rule*, the Predicters are *False Prophets*, not sent by God. Observe what I say, These *Predictions* were Occasioned by the demand of open Miracles. They were *Promises* of great Works, and particularly of a *Resurrection*. These *Promises* were made purely for the Establishing the *Credit* and *Authority* of the *Prophets*. It was said so in the *Inspirations* themselves. The time ; the Day, fixed ; and Circumstances declared. These things are what make *Prophecies* decisive. Now then, what will you say ? Hath that Text in *Moses* any Signification at all ? Or shall it signify any thing or nothing, according to your Pleasure ? Or can you give an Instance of any *Sign* thus promised, thus referr'd to by God, thus frequently, thus particularly described by any true *Prophet*, and this for the Conviction of the World ; which yet failed in the *Events* ? Or is it fair and candid, after all this to say that these *Predictions* were not *decisive*, nor designed so to be ?

10. If these *Failures* in your open and public *Appeals*, and *Prophecies*, be not sufficient to convince you of your *Delusion*, by what Argument, or what *Event*, can *Almighty God* convince you of it ? You put it out of his Power to do it, unless it be by answering all your *Predictions* by *Events* : For this, according to you, would give you some Suspicion that the *Spirit* of God, which you have made to be an *Arbitrary*, and *Deceptive Spirit*, is not amongst you.

11. If the *Events* predicted for the Confirmation of the *Truth* of your *Prophets*, had actually and exactly come to pass, I desire to ask, had this *Dispensation* been more like the Work of God, or less like it, or equally just as it was before such *Predictions* ? If it would have been more so, for such a Correspondence of *Events*,
then

then is it less so for the want of them, and less credible in the Eyes of the World ; and the World not to be blamed for rejecting it : And then likewise, is your late Way of arguing, and taking an Aire of greater Assurance from the Failure of them a great Sign of a *strong Delusion* upon you to the *believing a Lie*. If it would have been less like the Work of God, if he had fulfilled these *Predictions*, or only equally as it was before, then is it the highest Absurdity to suppose *Almighty God* predicting such *Events* as fit to be accomplished for the *Credit* of a *Dispensation*, when yet the Accomplishment of them would, it seems, have added nothing to the Credit of it ; but rather have made it appear less credible, and less divine than it would have been without it.

12. If you cannot name any one *True Prophet* sent with a *Message* of great and universal Importance ; or any one *Dispensation* to which the World was required to attend ; for the Confirmation of which *God Almighty* so much as permitted one such Appeal to be made, either by the *Humane*, or *Prophetical Spirit*, to great Signs, and wonderfull *Events*, for the establishing the *Credit* of it ; and afterwards failed in those *Events* : Ought you not all to lay your Hands upon your Hearts, and confess the great Indignity you have offered to the *Spirit of God* ; by introducing him as making Multitudes of such *Appeals* ; making repeated Promises and Professions of working such and such particular Miracles, at such a Time ; at such a Place ; and after such a Manner ; and this for the Confirmation of the *Ausority* of those who speak in his Name ; and then failing in all these promised public Attestations ? Ought you not to bewail the great Encouragement you have given to Men of *Unstable Principles* ; the great Stumbling-Block you have cast in the Way of the *Gospel* ;
the

the great Contempt you have brought upon *True Prophecy*, and the *Old Prophets*; and the great Sport you have made for a *Wicked and Scoffing Age of Unbelievers*; by fixing such things upon the *Supreme Being*, and his *Inspired Prophets*, as I really dread to repeat; such as leave no Room for any true Judgment concerning any *Revelation*; or any Distinction between *Faith* and *Credulity*; *Inspiration* and *Enthusiasm*?

What Thanks your *New Friends* may give you for your Performance I know not. You have strenuously laboured, sometimes to prove them *False Prophets* in mixing *Lies* with *Truth*; sometimes to prove them like *Abab's Prophets*, overruled by a *Deceptive Spirit*; sometimes like those *Prophets* in *Ezekiel* for whose Perverseness God threatned a terrible Punishment; sometimes like *Hananiah*, of whom *Jeremiah* declared that the Lord spake not by him; and sometimes even like *Baal's Prophets*. You implicitly acknowledg that they are of the Sort of *False Prophets* against whom our Saviour warns us, by telling us we are to understand by *False Prophets* such as mix their humane *Spirit* with the *Divine*: And you effectually convince us that they cannot be *True Prophets*, according to *St. Paul's* Notion, by assuring us that their *Spirit* is not subject to them, but wholly out of their own Power to model and govern; and consequently that they are incapable of following the Advice concerning *Order*, and *Decency* which that *Apostle* gives to the *Inspired* amongst the *Corinthians*.

How much the *Antient Prophets* are obliged to you, I have endeavoured to shew in the foregoing Pages, in which it hath been my Design to vindicate them from your unworthy *Aspersions*, and pernicious *Mistakes*. And having done this, as effectually as I can, I leave you to such Thoughts as a calm Review of this Cause may justly suggest to you.

E I N I S.

CONTENTS.

<i>Some Questions suitable to the Occasion of this Debate,</i>	Page 2
<i>The Preliminary Part of Sir R. B's Defense, particularly his Argument drawn from the Prediction of our Lord concerning the Coming of False Prophets, consider'd, & Of mixing the Human Spirit with the Divine, in Prophecy.</i>	7
<i>The Midnight Cry in the Parable no prophetical Warning.</i>	12
<i>The Heads, under which the Main Design of these Papers is prosecuted.</i>	
I. <i>The Precedents alleged out of Scripture, in favour of the Agitations of our New Pretenders to Inspiration, considered,</i>	13
II. <i>Their Prophetical Use of Signs considered,</i>	31
III. <i>The Precedents alleged for their manner of speaking in the Person of God, considered</i>	34
IV. <i>The Precedents alleged for their speaking vocally to themselves by their own Mouths, considered,</i>	35
V. <i>Their</i>	

CONTENTS.

V. *Their Interrupted and Unintelligible manner of speaking, considered, with what is alleged from the Antient Prophets, on this Head,* 38

Of God's permitting Honest Christians to be deluded, 41

That the Inspired under the Gospel, 1 Cor.

14. themselves understood what they spake in unknown Tongues, 43

VI. *The several Sorts of Predictions, and the several Sorts of Failures fixed by Sir R. B. upon Almighty God, and his Antient Prophets, considered,* 45

CONCLUSION.

Some serious Considerations offered to such as adhere to our New Dispensation, 67

ERRATA.

Page 7. l. 18. *dele* therefore. p. 18. l. 2. *read* chief. p. 20. l. 10. *r.* were. *ib.* l. 36. *r.* your. p. 21. l. 38. *r.* Friends. p. 30. l. 25. *r.* such. p. 34. l. 18. *r.* Accounts. p. 42. l. 7. *r.* good. *ib.* l. 22. *r.* him. *ib.* l. 24. *dele* the. p. 69. l. 3. *r.* Dispensation. p. 72. l. 27. *r.* hands.

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